

Account of one of the most horrid murders committed by a beggar man ever recorded; the father of the family was out shooting, and while absent, the beggar demanded of the woman the money he knew was in the house; the woman went up a ladder to where it was lying, and pulled it after her, by which she escaped from his bloody hands; he then took the two children, cut off their noses and ears, and then murdered them; the cries of the woman drew the attention of an officer who was passing in a carriage, who sent his servant to know the cause of the cries; the beggar plunged a knife in his body, and he fell; the officer then advanced, and met the beggar, who escaped from him, after losing the fingers of his right hand with a sabre, and meeting with the father of the children, said an officer had murdered his family, and he had just escaped; the man flew home in distraction, believing the beggar's story, shot the captain, and on hearing the true account, fell down and died.

The following dreadful event lately occurred in the neighbourhood of Smolensko. The owner of a lonely cottage being out on the chase, a beggar, to all appearance, old and weak, entered it at noon-day, and asked alms of the woman who was at home with only her two young children. The kind-hearted woman invites him to rest himself, while she goes out to get something for him to eat and drink. After the beggar had satisfied his hunger, he, to the no small astonishment of the woman, assumed a different language, and with a threatening voice, demanded the money, which he knew, he said, her husband had in the house. The wretch rushing on her with a large bread-knife, to force her to acknowledge where it was deposited, she declared herself ready to give him what money she had, and for this purpose mounted a ladder to a trap door leading to the loft above. As soon as she had mounted she drew up the ladder after her, so that it was impossible for him to get at her. Finding that she disregarded his menaces, he seized the two children, and swore he would either kill or maim them, if she did not immediately come down and deliver him the money as she had promised. The woman, however, remained in the loft, and endeavoured to force a hole through the thatch and call for help. While she was thus employed, the monster cut off the children's ears and noses; and at last killed the poor maimed innocents, scornfully proclaiming to the mother, the murder he had committed. The latter having, with great exertions, made a hole in the roof, called for help. Her cries were heard by an officer who was passing by in an open carriage, who sent his servant, while he remained sitting in the carriage, to inquire what was the matter.—The servant hastened to the spot, but on entering the cottage, was met by the murderer, who plunged the knife into his heart, so that he fell and expired without a groan. The officer, surprised at his delay, went himself to the cottage, where, perceiving the horrid scene, he attempted to stop the flight of the murderer, and with his sabre cut off all the fingers of his right hand, but was not able to hinder him from embracing the opportunity to escape by the door as it stood open. The woman had, while all this was passing, made her way through the roof, and run to the village, which was at a considerable distance, to fetch assistance. Meantime the husband on his way home meets the blood-stained murderer, whom he recognises as the beggar who frequents that part of the country. The hypocrite, concealing his fears under affected lamentation, held up his mutilated hand, saying: 'Make haste! there is in your house a murderer, an officer, who has killed your children, and likewise a man who attempted to defend them, and from whom I have narrowly escaped in the condition you see.' The terrified countryman, while the atrocious villain hastens to escape, flies, with his loaded gun in his hand, to his cottage; perceives thro' the open door the officer, and the bloody corpses of his children, takes him, of course, for the murderer, levels his piece, and shoots him dead on the spot!—The wife coming up with the villagers, hears the shot, sees the officer fall, uttered a piercing cry, and exclaims: 'What have you done? You have killed our deliverer—not he, but the beggar is the murderer of our children!' The husband, whose whole frame was shaken by the horror of the scene, and still more by his own rash deed, stands a few moments petrified and motionless, falls back in a fit, and expires!—Taken from the Literary Melange.