

"Why, to be sure. The lads went a hunting in the hills with Christian Vander, and night came on, and they never returned, and three days after they found out by the dog, how they came by their end."

"Aye, and you forget my lady the Countess's terrible dream," cried several voices at once. "How God shewed her, the old huntsman fling her son over the precipice, and the mad young Count was urging him on; and the old man lost his balance, and shared the same grave. Oh! it was terrible, terrible! And she said, she saw a long lock of her son's hair hanging among the bushes—and so they found it. The Count believes that they all died in that horrible chasm—but my lady says no. She is sure that the murderer still lives; and a reward has been offered for his apprehension. Has any one read the placard on the town-gates?"

"Not I," says old Peter. "For why—I cannot read."

"Nor I—nor I!" responded several voices.

"I pretended to be busy with the fire. My heart all the while beating audibly."

"'Tis a shocking business," said I. "Who will heir the estates now?"

"The Count is only in middle life. He may have sons yet."

"And my lady dying of grief!" said the old dame, in a reproving voice.

"Well, woman—if she dies, he can take a young wife, and have a dozen sons yet. I wonder what like the murderer is, and if they will be able to bring him to justice."

"What good would that do?" said I. "The poor lad is mad."

"Aye, so we have heard."

"Remember," said I, "if he is not mad, the uncle who robbed him of his estates, is the worst murderer of the two. I have seen and spoken with young Fredwald, and I believe him sane."

"If that's the case," said old Peter, "I don't blame him a bit. The uncle is the first cause of the crime. But I have heard this before. I knew Count Kolof well—and I am certain that he was no more mad than I am."

"Well, I hope the lad may be taken," said his wife. "Mad or not mad, he deserves to die. I only wish I could find him out, and claim the reward."

"Out upon you, woman. I am ashamed of you," said Peter. "Would you betray the unfortunate? May God do so to you, and more also, if you could be found capable of this thing."

"I repent this conversation just to shew you the constant hazard and anxiety to which I was exposed. From many trifling circumstances, I believe that old Rovin more than suspected me of

being the person proscribed by the government. The superiority of my appearance and manners, the studious way in which I busied myself at work, and kept out of sight when strangers came to the house, made him think that I was not what I seemed. One day in particular, he found me reading at a table, before the family assembled in the morning, one of the placards describing my height and person."

"How are you able to read, my lad?" said he, in evident astonishment.

"I knew it was useless to deny the fact. 'I learned,' I replied, 'of an old Lutheran priest, who used to visit our hut, and who supplied me from time to time with books.'

"Humph!" said he, "I never found these priests so generous. Will you read aloud that paper to me?"

"I did so in as steady a voice as I could command."

"Well, the description answers exactly to your own," said the good old man, without withdrawing his keen blue eyes from my face. "God help you if you are the man. I pity you from my very heart."

"Pshaw!" returned I, carelessly. "That tells nothing." Our cabin stood within an hour's walk of the castle—I may be his brother. Such things are common."

"True," said old Peter. "But as such a striking resemblance does exist, and you, a poor gontherd's son, have hands as white as a lady's, and can read and write, withal—why, I think—the sooner you leave here, the better."

"Perhaps so—but where shall I go? I have neither friends nor money."

"Health and strength, and a willing mind, will soon make money; and as to friends—I am your friend: and if you are indeed innocent, God will raise you up more. I will get you a berth to-night as cabin boy on board a brig, sailing for Copenhagen; and when there, you will soon obtain a place on board a man of war, if you wish really to follow the sea."

"I was terribly afraid of dame Rovin finding me out, and I joyfully embraced his offer. To Copenhagen I went, and after many strange adventures, which I have not time to relate, I became acquainted with Mathias Stavers, the well known pirate and smuggler; who still goes by the name of Mad Stavers, though the billows have long since found for him a salt water shroud."

"He was a fine, daring, high-spirited fellow—and after my first voyage with him, he made me his chief mate—and what with smuggling on the coast of France, Holland, and England—piratical seizures of small merchantmen on the high seas, and gambling on shore, we both grew rich,