

morrow!" he cried; and he mercilessly struck him with his riding whip on his head, on his face, wherever he could.

The blood ran down from Heinrich's cheeks, from his hands; but not a cry of pain did he utter.

He lay unconscious, when the Count, ceasing his barbarous treatment, sprang on his horse, whistled to his dogs, and galloped off.

A long time elapsed before Heinrich came to himself again. Slowly did he raise himself up, and then sank down again. Agonizing pains tortured him; he thought not of them, the disgrace he had suffered tortured him far more. The Count had treated him as if he were a brute beast, and only because he had interceded for his father. With both hands he covered his bleeding, swollen face. He no longer thought now about his father, a burning feeling of revenge possessed him. Life had no longer any value for him. He wept from sheer exhaustion; from extreme bitterness, too, because he had no weapon in his hand by which he could have rendered that monster, the Count, harmless for ever. Hitherto he had repressed every thought of violence, now he gave himself up to the idea with wild and eager passion.

He was ashamed to return to the village and let others witness the disgrace he had endured. What did it matter to him that he must pass a night in the open air? And had not the Count said that on the following morning he would have his father publicly whipped in the village? He raised a wild, loud laugh. That would be the moment for him to slake his burning vengeance; there publicly, in the presence of all the peasantry, he would do the deed.

Pursuing these thoughts he remained sitting in the ravine—quiet, motionless. He did not remark when the evening, when the night itself came on.

CHAPTER III.

Heinrich's absence had filled his mother and sister with the greatest anxiety. In vain did they inquire of their friends in the village about him. No one had seen him. They suspected what might be going on in his mind, and trembled at the thought lest he should carry it out. The last few days, too, had filled them with deep sorrow. Anna hastened again to the village to make more inquiries about her brother; with weeping eyes did she return.

"Have you heard nothing of him?" eagerly inquired her mother.

"Nothing," replied Anna; "he has done himself some injury, he has taken our father's misfortunes so deeply to heart."

Her mother shook her head.

"No; he has not done that, child," she replied. "Would he thereby make matters any better? He is too sensible for that. He has but one thought, to save his father, and this thought and fear will drive him to extremities—to some deed of violence. It is this which makes me so anxious about him."

Marie rushed into the room. She, too, had searched

for her lover without discovering anything about him. But the news which she brought caused their anxiety about Heinrich to pass into the background.

One of the bailiff's servant's had come into the village and related that Schober was that morning to be publicly whipped in the centre of the village, and had given orders to all the peasants to assemble at the appointed spot.

These tidings brought fresh despair into the house. In vain did these unprotected ones look round for help. Even Heinrich failed them now.

"The disgrace will kill my father," cried Anna; "he will never survive it!"

Her mother was silent. She, too, must confess that Schober would never survive this public punishment. She knew him too well; his heart was proud.

"It never can happen!" continued Anna with increasing indignation. "It shall not!"

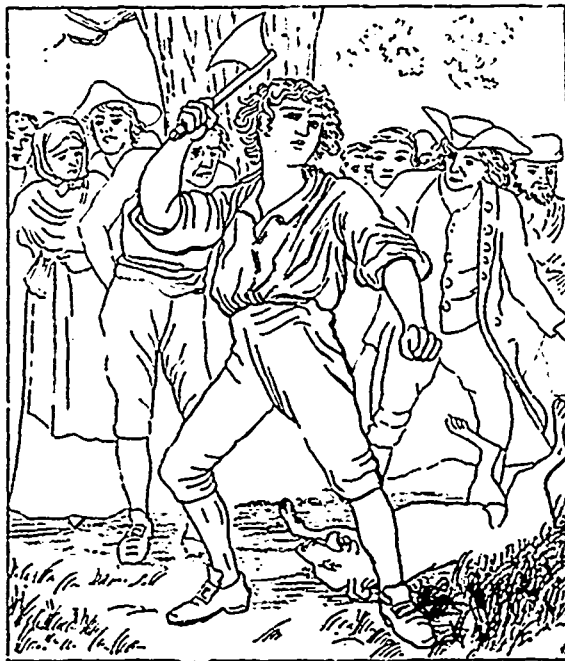
"Child! what can you do to prevent it?"

"I will go myself to the Count, throw myself once more at his feet; I will implore him."

"He knows no pity," replied her mother.

"Then I shall throw myself upon my father, and protect him with my body! They may beat me then—I shall bear it,—I shall not cry,—I shall not tremble!"

Filled with heroic indignation she hastened from the room and from the house. In vain did her mother try to keep her back.



HA! HA! COUNT, IT IS MY TURN NOW!

Without, in the village, on an open space, the peasants were assembled; men, women, and children. It was not curiosity which had brought them hither, but the command of the lord of the manor, and they were too timid, too utterly crushed to dare to disobey.

Terror and anguish were impressed on all their faces. The best man in the whole village, Schober, whom they all loved, who was ever ready to help and advise them all, was to be publicly whipped. He had always, without murmuring, done his work for his master; he had always cheered them on to persevere and endure—yes, when their strength began to give way, when embittered feelings would have driven them to rebellion. What might not happen now to themselves, if the master did not spare him, if he treated him in so

cruel a manner? They trembled when they thought of the future.

One of the bailiff's servants now came and brought some ropes, with which the unhappy man was to be bound to a tree, which stood in the centre of the village green.

"Back!" he cried to the peasants. "Ha! ha! to-day you shall witness a spectacle such as you have never beheld before. You shall see how many blows a man can endure before he dies! Ha! ha! you have a tough nature, like cats; but a cat, too, can at last be beaten to death, only one must not leave off too soon."

"Be pitiful!" implored one of the peasants.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the savage servant; "that we will be. When he has had enough! we will stop. The