

known to Dieudonné. He paused at the entrance of a small dark hollow, and was about to sit down; then, with a hasty glance round, a thought seemed to strike him.

"I'll get higher up; they can't see me, and I shall be sure to hear him coming—he always comes this way," he said, half aloud.

Still keeping his hold on something he carried, the little fellow placed his foot on a slight projection of the rock, and with small difficulty swung himself up into a niche, where he sat, curled up snugly, a little above the level of a tall man's head.

It was not a bad refuge in which to have passed the night, but Dondon, as they called him, had not the intention of sleeping just then. He sat on the alert, every two or three minutes peeping out and listening attentively.

There was no sound but the splash of the water against the wooden pier, the creaking of a chain, or the faint echo of some voice across the harbour. "He is late to-night," muttered the boy. Then he sat thinking over all that had happened during the day.

He was not so angry as you might feel you would be at what had been said by his neighbours in their wrath. What was troubling him most was where would he now get his daily meal? Yet there was one word which rankled in his memory. He knew in his heart he did not deserve that epithet.

"There he is!" He spoke the words right out in the gladness with which he heard a heavy footstep come crushing over the stones, with every now and again the burst of a cheery song, not very great as to time or tune.

It came nearer quickly, and was just beneath the hole where Dondon lay hid, when he put out his head, and said, softly:

"Jean! Jean Pitou!"

"Hillo!" was the reply, as the stalwart figure of a man in a fisherman's dress halted and turned up a pleasant sunburnt face towards the sound.

"It's me! Dondon."

"Dieudonné! What you doing there? Can't you get down?" Without waiting for an answer Jean Pitou grasped the boy by the legs, and in the twinkling of an eye had him on the ground beside him.

"What were you doing there, hiding?"

"Waiting for you!"

"Me! What for? Who set you?"

"No one set me. Oh, don't please make any noise: they'll be out and at me again."

"At you! What's all this, then? What you done?"

Then the boy told all.

"They called me *coward*: I ain't that, am I? And Claire Chaudron she threw this at me" (holding up the ragged shawl) "and bade me dress like a girl!"

"For why?"

"Because I am afraid of the sea!"

Jean Pitou who during the recital had been leaning against the cliff, and frowning and laughing by turns, now burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha! ha! afraid of the sea! Thou! I'll show them!"

"They called me coward, and I am not that," the boy repeated, his dark face flushing.

"Coward! no! Afraid of the sea! we'll show them!"

In a moment the big fellow had the boy up in his hands. He tossed him as if he were a puppet.

The boy, not understanding his object, offered no resistance. Jean Pitou strode on, and ran swiftly down the stone steps to the water's edge.

In another moment Dondon, ere he had time to make any resistance, or utter a cry, was plunged under water. Once, twice, three times he went in, Jean still keeping firm hold of his clothes, and roaring with laughter every time the gasping face appeared.

In three instants it was over. Then scrambling back with his dripping burthen, Pitou stalked up the quay, and shouted like a maniac, "Come out, come out; who says he's afraid?"

Doors and windows were thrown open. "It's Jean Pitou," they cried; "what mad freak is he after now?"

There stood the giant, as he seemed, holding on high poor Dieudonné, the water streaming from his hair and clothes, his eyes blinking like those of a half-drowned poodle.

"Afraid of the sea, is he?" roared the tipsy joker. "I'd like to see either of you do what he has."

The spectators laughed. Some cried, "Bah! thou hast been drinking. Pitou! go thy ways to bed!"

The humour of the big man changed. He shook his fist at the retiring crowd.

"I'll hammer the first that dares call him names," he cried. "He's going to sea with me to-morrow."

A chorus of laughter greeted this announcement.

"Give him some supper first," called one. And again the doors were closed upon the two.

On strode Jean Pitou, carrying his trembling burthen. Soon he reached a small house, standing apart from the rest. Here he stopped, and, pushing open the door with his foot, deposited Dondon on the floor, where he dripped like a shoal of newly caught fish. A lamp burned on the table, which was laid for supper. There was a savoury smell in the room; an old woman sat in the chimney-corner, knitting.

"Here, mother, is a big fish," cried Jean Pitou. "He must be dressed for supper."

Then, hurrying the boy before him to a little bunk beyond, he bade him take off his wet clothes, and threw to him an old coat of his own, which might have well made two suits for Dondon. Then he pushed him to the supper-table.

"Come and eat thy fill. So they call thee Fichu? Ha! ha! And you sail with me to-morrow. We'll see who's afraid of the sea!"

If Jean Pitou supposed that the involuntary baptism to which he had subjected little Dieudonné would have the effect of putting him in more friendly relations with the sea, or that a good night's rest or a plentiful breakfast might give him fresh courage, he was disappointed.

The boy helped with the nets and stores, and loaded himself willingly with the needful etceteras of the fisherman; gladly accompanying his friend even to the water's edge. But not all the persuasion, and finally the reviling of big Pitou could move the youngster one step farther.

"You don't care to be with me, I see," said Jean.

"I do," was the reply, laconic, but earnest.

"Then come along."

A shake of the head was the only answer.

"Afraid you'll be drowned?"

"No!"

"Jump in, then!"

Dondon shook his head again.

"They'll worry your life out here."

"They won't find me!"

"Where are you going? Oh! stuff! you *shall* come!"

And the fisherman made a step towards Dieudonné, who leaped back swiftly, and grasped with all his might the iron post beside him.

"Let him be, my son," said the calm voice of the old mother, who had come down to see her son depart. "Let him be! all are not alike; maybe there is other work for him to do."

"Oh! Bah! stay at home then," cried Jean. "They are right, and coward *is* the word."

The boy's face flushed red, and his chest heaved, but he said nothing.

"Adieu, my mother; give little Fichu a job to fill the