

coat. 'Lubert,' cried he, turning to the sailor, 'we must have the *traineur de greves*, dead or alive.'

'I will help you,' replied Lubert, who took a step towards the house of Louis.

At this moment the latter came out with Taumic carrying a light bundle on a stick over his shoulder. The patron ran to meet him, seized him by the hand, and dragged him towards the group of peasants.

'What do you want with me father Goron?' demanded the young man in a troubled voice.

'That you acknowledge here before every body why Niette was with you yesterday in the grotto,' said the mariner, whose look fastened on Marzou had an expression of ill concealed hatred; 'but you must tell the truth, understand me, and nothing but the truth, for by Heaven if you do not, it shall be your last falsehood.'

'I have nothing to conceal,' said Marzou with some emotion, but in a frank tone; 'you had threatened to injure me; your daughter was afraid, and as she went to look for her cow, descended the rocks of Castelli to put me on my guard.'

'And the boy and girl talked so loud that they could not hear the sea coming' interrupted Pierre, laughing. 'Devil! what need is there of explaining that?'

Goron turned towards the fisherman with clenched hands, then concentrating again his rage upon Marzou: '*You hear, vagabond,*' cried he, 'here is Niette defamed, thanks to you.'

'Do not believe that, Master Goron,' replied Louis, warmly, 'those who have known your daughter ever since her first communion, will not condemn her thus upon a word; and even Pierre himself who has saved her life, would not destroy her good name.'

'No, by my baptism, no,' replied the fisherman, touched with this appeal to his generosity. 'May the crabs eat my eyes, if I wished to injure Niette. What I said was simply for the love of talking, because every body said you had a great regard for her.'

'It is false,' cried Goron stamping his foot with rage. 'Thunder! tell him it is false; say that Niette is nothing to you, that you know she is above you. Say that you have never thought of her—say this immediately!'

'Excuse me, Master Goron, but I cannot lie,' answered the *traineur de greves*, with a mournful firmness.

'Then you acknowledge your effrontery, dog of a bastard!' cried the patron, exasperated. 'Do you hear, Lubert, this is he who wishes to take your place.'

'It is good,' said Lubert, who not having been able till now to get a word in, seized the opportunity to shake his fists at him. 'We shall see which will conquer; quick, off with your coat.'

'It is useless,' said Louis, tranquilly, 'I know you are stronger than I.'

The spectators uttered a murmur of astonishment.