

A Ladder of Swords

might be due to his announcement that she had lost a friend. He was magnanimous at once, and he meant what he said, and would stand by it through thick and thin.

"Well, well, I'll be thy everlasting friend if not thy husband," he said, with ornate generosity. "Cheer thy heart, lady."

With a sudden impulse she seized his hand and kissed it, and, turning, ran swiftly down the rocks towards her home.

He stood and looked after her, then, dumfounded, at the hand she had kissed.

"Blood of my heart!" he said, and shook his head in utter amazement.

Then he turned and looked out upon the Channel. He saw the little boat Angèle had descried making from France. Glancing at the sky, "What fools come there!" he said, anxiously.

They were Michel de la Forêt and Buonespoir the pirate, in a black-bellied cutter with red sails.