

"Uncle, you've got a bite," said the girl coolly.

"Eh? So I have. Got him, too," said the old man, striking and playing his fish just as if he were angling in fresh water. "Thumper."

"What pleasure can it give you to say such unpleasant things, uncle?" continued the girl.

"Truths always are unpleasant," said the old man, laughing. "Don't bother me, there's a shoal off the point now, and I shall get some fish."

"Why you have all you want now, uncle."

"Rubbish! Shall get a few shillingsworth to sell Mother Perrow."

"Poor Uncle Luke!" said the girl with mock solemnity; "obliged to fish for his living."

"Better than idling and doing nothing. I like to do it, and—— There he is again. Don't talk."

He hooked and landed another fine bass from the shoal which had come up with the tide that ran like a millstream off the point, when as he placed the fish in the basket he raised his eyes.

"Yah! Go back and look after your men. I thought that would be it. Maddy, look at her cheeks."

"Oh, uncle, if I did not know you to be the best and dearest of——"

"Tchah! Carney!" he cried, screwing up his face. "Look here, I want to catch a few fish and make a little money, so if that long Scot is coming courting, take him somewhere else. Be off!"

"If Mr. Duncan Leslie is coming to say good-day, uncle, I see no reason why he should not say it here," said Louise, calmly enough now, and with the slight flush which had suffused her cheeks fading out.

"Good-day. A great tall sheepish noodle who don't know when he's well off," grumbled the fisher, throwing out once more as a tall gentlemanly-looking young fellow of about eight-and-twenty stepped actively from rock to rock till he had joined the group, raising his soft tweed hat to the ladies and shaking hands.

"What a lovely morning!" he said eagerly. "I saw you come down. Much sport, Mr. Vine?" he added, as he held out his hand.

"No," said Uncle Luke, nodding and holding tightly on to his rod. "Hands full. Can't you see?"