

"No," said the fisherman grimly, "only hate me like poison, for a sour old crab. Never gave me a kiss when you came."

"How could I without getting wet?" said the girl with a glance at the tiny rock island on which the fisher stood.

"Humph! Going back to-morrow, eh? Good job too. Why, he has been a whole half-year in his post."

"Yes, uncle, a whole half-year!"

"And never stayed two months before at any of the excellent situations your father and I worried ourselves and our friends to death to get for him."

"Now, uncle——"

"A lazy, thoughtless, good-for-nothing young vag—— There, hold her again, Louie. She's going to peck."

"And you deserve it, uncle," cried the girl, with a smile at her companion, in whose eyes the indignant tears were rising.

"What! for speaking the truth, and trying to let that foolish girl see my lord in his right colours?"

"Harry's a good affectionate brother, and I love him very dearly," said Louise, firmly; "and he's your brother's son, uncle, and in your heart, you love him too, and you're proud of him, as proud can be."

"You're a silly, young goose, and as feather-brained as he is. Proud of him? Bah! I wish he'd enlist for a soldier, and get shot."

"For shame, uncle!" cried Louise indignantly; and her face flushed too as she caught and held her companion's hand.

"Yes. For shame! It's all your aunt's doing, stuffing the boy's head full of fantastic foolery about his descent, and the disgrace of trade. And now I am speaking, look here," he cried, turning sharply on the fair girl, and holding his rod over her as if it were a huge stick which he was about to use. "Do you hear, Madelaine?"

"I'm listening, Mr. Vine," said the girl, coldly.

"I've known you ever since you were two months old, and your silly mother must insist upon my taking hold of you—you miserable little bit of pink putty, as you were then, and fooled me into being god-father. How I could be such an ass, I don't know—but I am, and I gave you that silver cup, and I've wanted it back ever since."

"Oh, uncle, what a wicked story!" cried Louise, laughing.