

# PAUL JONES WEEKLY

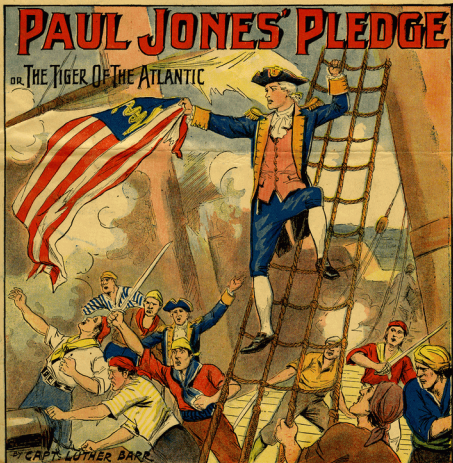
STORIES OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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No. 3

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 14, 1905.

Price, Five Cents



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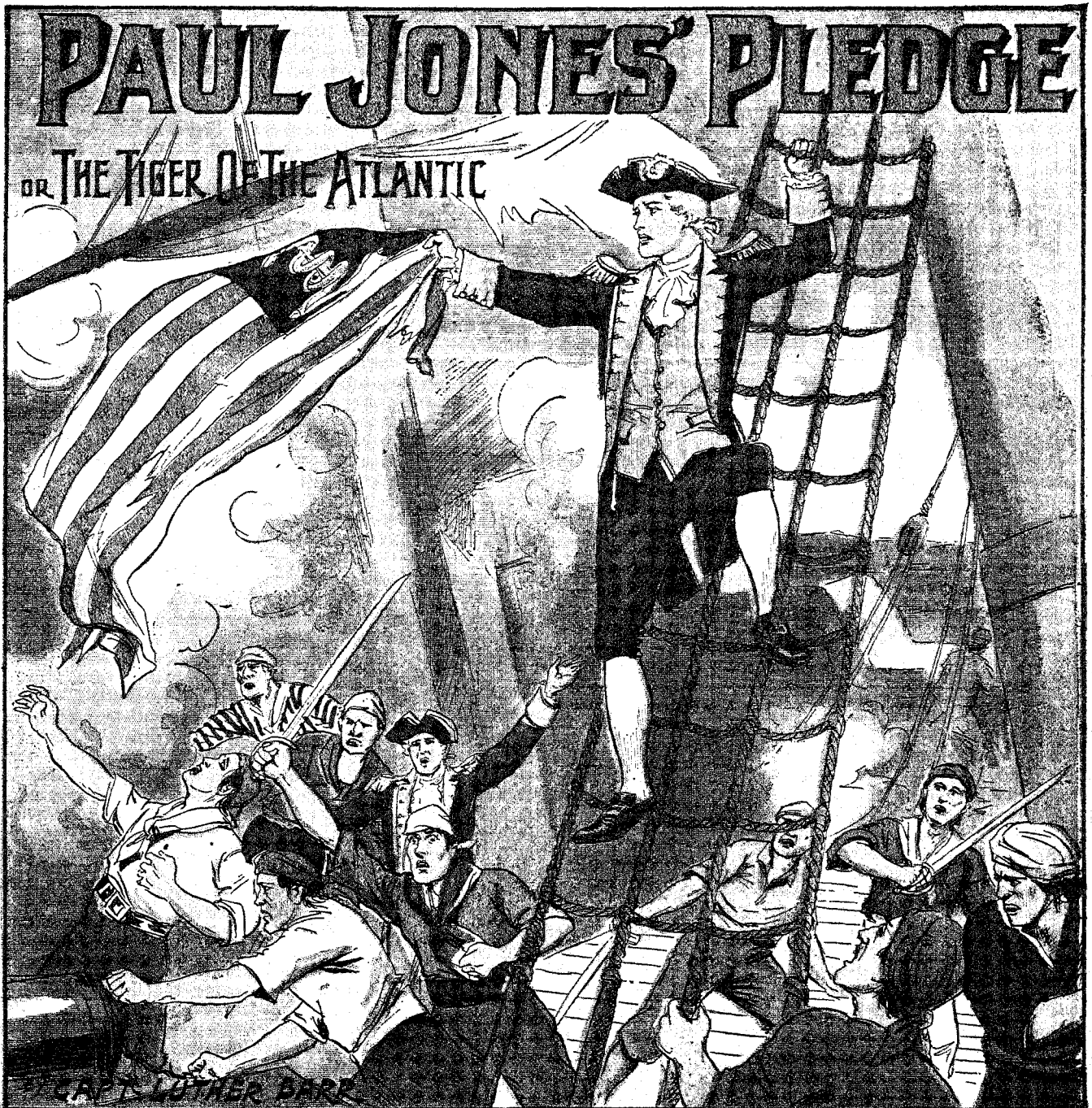
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**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** At some time or other the fascination of life at sea takes hold upon the imagination of the average lad who has healthy red blood in his veins. From the day he is able to read the stirring adventures of Robinson Crusoe, a yearning to travel and look upon strange sights the world over takes possession of him. Usually this gradually gives way to the less strenuous pleasures that surround him at home, but in innumerable instances it has led young fellows to go forth to seek their fortune. And surely, of all thrilling stories concerning the wonders of a life upon the ocean wave, none are so apt to arouse the intense interest of Young America as the famous and dashing exploits of that heroic sailor of Revolutionary days, Paul Jones. His fearless voyages would fill volumes; and believing that a hearty welcome awaits the publication of a series containing his adventures, we have changed the name of our weekly so as to cover that field exclusively.

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## WEEKLY

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# PAUL JONES' PLEDGE;

OR,

## THE TIGER OF THE ATLANTIC.

By CAPT. LUTHER BARR.

### CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

*Paul Jones*, the most remarkable character of the Revolutionary War—a young sea adventurer, whose daring deeds have long been told in song and story; whose name thrilled the whole world, and created a reign of terror along the coasts of Great Britain when he battled with and conquered some of the best war ships of the British navy, while his own was but little better than a "tub"—a man who knew not the meaning of the word "fear," and who was as gallant as he was brave.

*Dale*, his first officer, and a man Jones loved.

*Crawford*, commander of the American vessel, *Pallas*.

*Biddle*, who had charge of Jones' other ship, the *Concord*.

*Jimmie*, a youngster who was made an ensign for bravery.

*Old Bill Coff*, boatswain and a man of valor.

*Charles Harkness*, an English officer who did not forget a kindness.

*Scipio* and *Cato*, two craven hearted negroes from a Virginia plantation.

*La Belle Francesca*, a dancer in a French seaport.

*Grimstone*, who commanded a British sloop-of-war, and had reason to remember Paul Jones the rest of his life.

### CHAPTER I.

#### PEA SOUP AND TROUBLE.

"Sail ho!"

The cry of the lookout on the fore-castle of the *Vengeance*, which, as our readers will remember, was the flag-ship of dashing Paul Jones, the founder and hero of the American Navy, galvanized into activity the crew, who, as it was Sunday afternoon, were lounging in various lazy attitudes about the deck of the speedy war ship.

Hardly had the first cry rung out than it was echoed from the main topmast.

"Where away?" bawled Lieut. Dale, the first "luff" of Jones' vessel.

"Right off the starboard!" was the response from the maintop.

"Right off the port bow," was echoed from the fore-castle.

At the first cry Jones had issued from his cabin beneath the poop deck; he had been up all the previous night, for the *Vengeance* and the squadron acting as her consorts had run into a stiff blow, and it had needed all the seamanship of Jones and his mates to bring her through all taut.

The commander of the *Vengeance* ran forward, buttoning his well-worn uniform coat as he went, and, telescope in hand, took up his position on the forecastle head.

He was followed by his first lieutenant and the young fellow to whom the reader has been previously introduced as Jimmy Blake, the powder monkey, but whose rank was raised by special act of Congress and who was now known as Ensign James Blake.

The crew, too, had clustered about their commander as he swept the sea with his glass.

"What do you make of them, sir?"

The question came from Jimmy, whose face was flushed with eagerness at the thought that here at last was the vanguard of the British fleet that Jones had pledged his word to Congress to keep from a swoop on the shores of America.

The lad's heart beat high at the feeling that at last he was to have a chance to go into action, and prove to the nation that he was a not unworthy son of the first American Navy.

Jones laid aside the telescope and then turned to the lad with a kindly look in his keen gray eyes.

"They are ships of war," he replied, "that much is certain; but of what nation I have no means of ascertaining till we are near enough to make them show their colors."

"But they can be none other than the vanguard of the British fleet?"

"Let us hope so, for I do not want the Britishers to slip past us in the night or otherwise evade us."

The *Vengeance* was tearing through the water at a rate that gave her two consorts, the sloop-of-war *Pallas* and the brig *Concord*, all they could do to keep within sight of her.

The stiff breeze that was blowing had laid her over till her channels were awash.

Dale cast an anxious glance aloft at the straining top hamper of the flagship. Her great sails were bellied out till it seemed as if they must carry away, and the taut rigging whistled like piano wire.

"Had I not better order down the main topgallant?" he asked, looking at Jones, whose gaze was bent intently ahead at the two ships that were, as yet, only dim purple shadows on the horizon.

"No," said the young commander, without removing the glass from his eye, "keep on all standing as we are. I mean to get up with yon craft before nightfall if we fetch our sticks out."

Dale nodded, but ordered new tackle bent onto the weather rigging, and the sheets flattened a little so as to take the strain from the bending spars.

The excitement was intense.

Not a man on board the ship but was eager for a brush with the British vessels if, indeed, they were British.

"We will teach the beggars a lesson," quoth old Bill Cuff, the boatswain, to a group of his mates who had gathered about him to glean from his lips the veteran's opinion of the chance there was of a scrimmage when they overhauled the two big vessels ahead.

The latter seemed to be under no particular apprehension, though they must have long since sighted the little Yankee squadron.

As Jones had said, they were two of the leviathan "three-deckers" of the English Navy.

As they "stood about" in the bright sunlight the flashing Atlantic waves heeled them over till they showed their copper.

Both of them sported three rows of black-and-white ports a side.

It seemed madness on the part of the young American commander to pit his tiny fleet against two such formidable fighting machines, but as the British had learned to their cost, it took more than heavy odds against him to deter the young "sea eagle," as people had already begun to call him, from facing his country's foe.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed the young ensign, "we are in for a fight, sure."

"Do you hear that, mates?" cried old Bill Cuff, as he heard the words of his young commander, "we are in for a fight. Away, you starboard battery men, and get your barkers ready to give Johnny Bull a warm reception."

At this juncture a strange interruption occurred in the shape of an exceedingly fat and exceedingly black negro, who was projected from the door of the galley, with a force that suggested that his movement was not entirely voluntary.

The ship was heeling over to the ever stiffening breeze till her lee scuppers were all awash.

The unfortunate cook, for such was the office of the darky who had just emerged from the little galley, held in his hands a large "kid" of steaming pea soup which was destined for the men's dinners.

He had intended to carry it forward, but as he crossed the threshold of his domain the ship gave a lurch and the negro gave a yell as he felt himself and his savory burden being gradually impelled toward the boiling puddle of the scuppers.

"Scipio seems to be in trouble," said Dale, as his eye lit on the struggling darky.

The words had hardly left his lips before a second chocolate-colored face was poked out of the galley door and a second portly Senegambian went staggering to the aid of his unfortunate fellow cook.

Old Bill Cuff saw their predicament.

"Sink me, if them fellers ain't goin' to let the crew's dinner go to feed the fish!" he angrily exclaimed, as the two darkies, wildly gesticulating, were forced nearer and ever nearer to the seething scuppers.

The old bosun was a man of action, and he did not waste any time on mere words, but plunged gallantly to the rescue of the two struggling cooks.

"Golly! Massa Cuff," shrieked the second of the two sons of Ham, "but dis am a terrible t'ing, dis yar sea, sure 'nuff."

"Belay!" shouted old Cuff, as he clawed his way along the steeply sloping deck. "Ef yer spill that thar soup, ye black idjuts, I'll brain yer with this fist!"

With these words he shook that formidable member at the already terrified negroes.

Unfortunately for his dignified demeanor, however, the ship at the same moment gave an unusually violent lurch and the old boatswain was sent spinning straight against the men to whom he had been handing out his admonition.

The two holders of the soup "kid" gave vent to a howl of dismay as they saw the burly form of the old sailor hurtling toward them with the speed and force of a projectile.

Cuff himself saw, long before it actually happened, that a collision was inevitable, unless one or the other of the negroes sheered off.

"Hard over, ye lubbers!" he yelled, with his storm voice, as he was pleased to call the stentorian tones with which he was in the habit of calling the watch on a rough night.

The wretched negroes obeyed his instructions literally. Their obedience, however, was involuntary, for the massive body of the old man reeled, with all the force that a fresh lurch of the plunging ship imparted to it, full against them.

Men and soup went sliding into the boiling mass of water in the lee scuppers.

Cuff was on his feet in a moment and stood, painstakingly, wiping the soup out of his grizzled whiskers with one hand, while he wrathfully shook the other at the two half-drowned darkies.

"Bad luck to you, you leather-skinned sons of Ham!" he roared. "Sure it's myself that wishes the Ark had struck a rock-and gone to Davy Jones' locker before Noah's son ever got to Africa to raise such a gang of fellows as you are."

"But, Mister Tuff——"

Poor Scipio got no further.

"Cuff is my name, sir," roared the infuriated boatswain.

"Yas, sah, Massa Bluff——"

Cuff's face grew purple.

"Are you making fun o' me on purpose?" he demanded.

"No, indeed, sah, Massa Ruff——"

"And it's rough you'll find me, my laddy-buck. Lay aft! lay aft, and get some more peas from the steward's boy or it's a coffin we'll be makin' for you before night."

Jones and his young officer were watching the scene from the fore-castle head, and the young commander, when he had recovered from his first amusement, took pity on the misfortunes of the two negroes who had been taken to sea by him from the plantaion he owned in Virginia, in order to satisfy the craving they had expressed to see "de mighty oshun."

Many a time since the *Vengeance* and her two consorts had sailed they had regretted their rash step, and now were looking forward in terror to the day when they would smell powder for the first time.

As they hastened back to the galley to carry out the furious Cuff's order, Jones hailed the boatswain.

"They are punished enough, Mr. Cuff," he said, as seriously as he could. "Besides, I have work on hand for you elsewhere than in the galley."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE SEA FIGHT.

The *Vengeance* was by this time separated from the two British war vessels by a little over half a mile.

This space she was rapidly covering.

Half an hour more would lay her alongside the two great craft.

Jones' face was lighted up with the eager look peculiar

to it when the young commander was about to go into action.

With flashing eye he felt the hilt of the magnificent sword presented to him by Louis of France.

"You mean to attack them," asked Dale, "or shall we try and show them a clean pair of heels?"

Jones turned on him almost angrily.

"We are pledged to drive the red cross of St. George from the Western seas," he exclaimed, "and shall we turn tail at the first sight of the enemy?"

"But," objected Dale, "we shall in all probability be blown out of the water at the first broadside from these fellows."

"I intend to fire the first broadside," was the calm reply.

"But they are undoubtedly not alone; the rest of the fleet is somewhere about and it would be madness to engage the entire force of the British."

"Our duty lies plainly before us, Dale. Will you order the signal man to inform the *Pallas* and the *Concord* that we will engage the enemy; and you, Blake, lay aft and have the port battery cleared for action."

The two officers hastened to obey.

It was none too soon to put the ship in fighting trim, for the next moment a puff of smoke from the side of the hindmost of the English ships and the scream of the ball as it passed over their heads, warned them of the hostile nature of the two strangers, even if they had not been informed of their nationality by the display of the British naval flag.

"Shall we give it to them back, sir?" asked Jimmy, who had got his battery in fighting shape and was eager for a chance to show what his carefully trained gunners could do.

"Not yet," replied Jones; "we would simply be wasting powder and shot, and we cannot afford to do that."

"You intend to reserve your fire, then?" asked Dale.

"For the present, yes. We will wear round to the windward of them and then show our teeth; that will give us a distinct advantage."

The other nodded and seemed about to say something, but he was interrupted by a wail of anguish from the two negroes.

"Massa Jones!" cried Scipio, "am it a fac', sah, dat you intends to fight with them two big ships?"

Jones nodded.

"Then fo' de Lord's sake, massa, I have ter giv' you notice an' mus' respectfully request to be put on dry lan' once more."

"I am afraid that is impossible, Scipio."

"Den we have to stay aboard an' hear dem awfly bullets go whizzin' over our heads? No, massa, we mus' mos' respectfully decline de honor."

"An' I secon' de motion," declared Cato.

"What!" exclaimed Jones, half amused and half angry. "I thought you two fellows wanted to see what life on a ship was like, and here, at your first chance of smelling powder, you want to get out of sight."

"As far as is possible out of sight, yes, sah, Massa Jones; dat am a solid fac'."

"Then down with you into the forecandle! This ship is no place for two such cowards as you are."

"Dat may be true, sah, but I was taught by my ole mammy, in good ole Virginia, dat it is a great deal better fo' folks to say 'dar he goes' dan 'dar he lays.'"

Despite his disgust, Jones could not refrain from laughing as the two woolly-headed cowards disappeared down the forecandle hatch.

There was no time, however, to exchange words on any other topic than the business in hand.

The *Vengeance* was now close enough to the rear frigate to read her name, *Benbow*, which was displayed in gorgeous scrollwork on her rounded stern.

This was the vessel commanded by Capt. Hawksdale, who had sworn to rid the sea of Jones or sink his own vessel in the attempt.

Jones was well aware of this boast, for, during his visit in France he had been informed of the bitter enmity the British captain cherished toward him.

As he recognized his enemy's vessel the battle light came into his face.

The lines about his mouth set and hardened and a steely glint came into his eyes.

It was the face of a fighting man.

"Show them 'the Rattlesnake,'" he ordered, curtly, and a moment later the famous standard of the coiled rattlesnake was floating from the peak of the gallant Yankee vessel.

The *Pallas* and her companion followed suit and a full-throated American cheer was borne over the waves as the emblem of liberty was displayed.

The British vessel replied with a volley of musket balls that did no more harm than to plow up the deck.

They had the effect, however, of arousing the American crew to a state of fury.

"The scoundrels," roared old Bill Cuff, squinting along the polished barrel of the wicked-looking bow chaser.

The old man was an expert gunner, and Jones had intrusted to him the task of winging the great three-decked frigate so that she would be at the mercy of the Yankee's broadside.

At last Jones gave the long-expected signal.

"Let them have it," he said to the boatswain.

Cuff stepped back a foot or two and waited, lanyard in hand, till the *Vengeance* came up on an even keel.

"Cut her maintop in half if you can, Cuff," cried Jones, eagerly.

Every eye on board Jones' vessel was on the old man as he jerked the lanyard.

The gun spoke and the deadly missile screeched through the air.

The ball sped through the rigging of the Britisher and parted some of her maintop hamper; but the spar itself was untouched.

"Missed, by thunder!" exclaimed Bill, wiping the smoke from his eyes with the back of his hand.

At the same moment the Britisher wore round, an evolution in which she was followed by her sister ship.

"Signal the others that we will tackle the *Benbow*," exclaimed Jones, turning to the signal master; "they must hold the attention of the other three-decker while we engage."

The signal man broke out the bunting, and the brig and the little sloop-of-war put their helms up and headed for the *Benbow's* consort.

Jones himself took the wheel of the *Vengeance* and jammed her up into the wind till she had the Britisher on her weather quarter.

Fortunately, the *Vengeance* was what is known to sailors as "a weatherly craft," and she could hug the breeze a good two points further up than the big three-decker, which, as was the way of her type, showed a wake almost as broad as a county.

The sailing qualities of Jones' ship brought him up where he could rake his foe with deadly effect.

The young commander stood on his quarter-deck, in his battle-stained uniform, and watched the movements of the three-decker intently through the telescope.

When the foresail of the *Vengeance* began to shiver as she took the wind over her bow, he ordered her to bear down on the huge foe that was now floundering about like some agitated leviathan.

The reason of her dilemma was that her captain had attempted to follow Jones' evolution and had only succeeded in getting his ship into "irons."

That is, that she was jammed up into the wind till she pointed right at the blow.

This had the effect of setting her "all aback," and she lay helpless for a moment till her people could swing her great main topsail about.

Jones was quick to see his advantage and act on it.

"Fire!"

The command was passed from the poop deck to the region below, where, in the light of the battle lanterns the crew, stripped to the waist and barefooted, were ramming home the deadly contents of the starboard broadside.

A sheet of flame and smoke belched from the Yankee's side and she trembled from stern to stem-post, as the guns discharged their deadly hail.

Jones sprang into the lee rigging as the smoke blew out over the sea and eagerly observed the effect of his assault.

The telescope showed him that his broadside had severely crippled the Britisher, but owing to the great height of her sides, the shots had for the most part struck her too low to inflict as much damage as would have been the case had she been raked along the decks.

It was at this moment that the accident Dale had dreaded took place.

As the Yankee ship, after pouring in the broadside, was put before the wind, the main topmast backstay parted, with the report of a cannon.

Instantly the sail tore the spar of the main topmast clean out of its steppings and in a moment everything aloft was in a terrible muddle.

The man at the helm let her pay off in order to save the foremast, for had that spar parted, they would have been at the mercy of their foe as much as if they were aboard a helpless wreck.

The moment was the opportunity for which the *Benbow* had been waiting.

At the same time as Jones' ship had met with her disaster the British ship had been "eased" and her pruning broadsides now threatened the brave little *Vengeance*.

A perfect volcano broke from her three gun tiers and the decks of the Yankee ship were swept, as though by a tornado, under the storm of shell and grapeshot that hurtled about her.

The little craft was riddled from stem to stern and her rigging cut to shreds by the chain shot, with which some of the British guns had been loaded.

The already strained masts snapped like wooden knit-

ting needles as the stays parted and the falling timbers and blocks converted the decks already strewed with the dead and dying into a veritable shambles.

Amid the confusion Jones and Dale, with Jimmy and old Bill Cuff, alone remained calm.

The scene was enough to try the nerves of the bravest.

Everywhere men were dying or dead. The vessel, which but a moment before had been as staunch a craft as sailed the sea, was converted into a mere dismantled hull at the mercy of the Britisher to do as he willed with.

"Get together all the men you can," was Jones' first order, "and cut away all this hamper."

"It ain't much good," muttered old Bill Cuff, as he sounded his boatswain's pipe, to which, however, not more than a dozen men answered, "we are as good as dead already."

After the mass of rigging and spars that had floated alongside had been cut away by the crew's axes, the vessel was found to be fast sinking.

At the same moment Jimmy uttered a cry and pointed to the three-decker.

She had "gone about," after her deadly broadside and was now bearing directly down on the Yankee's dismantled hull.

"What can she intend to do?" asked Dale.

"If she keeps on her present course that question is easily answered," was Jones' reply.

"What does that mean?"

"That she is going to ram us and send us to the bottom!"

"Never, she could not be so inhuman."

"Why not? This is war and they are dealing with a foe they are determined to crush out at all hazards. They will stop at nothing to accomplish their purpose."

"This is fiendish!" exclaimed Jimmy.

"Is there no way we can save ourselves if she carries out the plan you think she has?"

Dale asked the question.

He was a brave man, as brave as could be found on the high seas; but there was something terrible to him in the thought of being sent to the bottom without having a chance to strike a blow in his own defense.

If he could have died fighting he would have met his death, as would his two companions, without a tremor.

Jones thought for a moment, his eyes fixed on the fast advancing three-decker as he pondered.

"There is a way," he said at length, "but it is such a

desperate resort that I am afraid you will not care to adopt it."

"What is it?"

"Why, when the crash comes we must spring into her main chains and swarm onto her deck."

"It is only changing our mode of death."

"Possibly, but while there is life there is hope; and I mean to make the attempt."

"Paul Jones, you are a brave man."

"To avoid death? I don't think so; that is an instinct even with animals.

"You must take care to keep your pistols dry, for we shall have plenty of work for both them and our cutlasses when we get on the British decks."

### CHAPTER III.

#### RAMMED!

The men who remained of the crew were called aft and the plan explained to them.

They all agreed to stand by their officers and fight to the death rather than be sent to Davy Jones in their riddled hulk.

There was no doubt now of the Britisher's plan.

Straight down on the doomed Yankee bore the leviathan hull of the three-decker, driven at tremendous speed by her great spread of canvas.

She was drawing so near by now that the men on the battered *Vengeance* could almost hear the "swish" of her forefoot as she cut through the seas.

A shudder passed through more than one of the men on the bloody deck as they thought that ere long the keen stem would have cut the hulk they floated on sheer in half.

It was at this moment that Paul Jones left the deck and disappeared down the after companion.

He was not missed for several moments in the general confusion that reigned at the time.

The young commander swung himself easily down the companion stairway till he reached the alleyway leading to the powder magazine.

He wrenched one of the smoking battle lanterns from the wall and, tearing off a strip of his shirt, wetted it in a pail of water which stood near the magazine door, and then spread powder on the dampened linen.

Then he listened intently.

Above the groans of the dying that made the ship hideous he heard a warning cry from the deck.



The moment had come!

Quickly he thrust the strip of linen, which was to serve as a fuse, into the flame of the lantern.

It made a capital fuse and he trust it, sputtering and glowing, into the magazine.

Then he turned and ran quickly to the deck.

He was not a moment too soon!

Right above the smoking, battered hull of the little *Vengeance* towered the huge black shape of the three-decker.

From the low elevation of the little craft the Britisher seemed to tower like a mountain.

"Stand by!" cried Jones, as the huge, sheering bow was right upon them.

"Stand by!" was echoed among the devoted little Yankee band.

The next moment there was a rending crash, as the bowsprit of the Britisher tore its way through what was left of the Yankee's top hamper.

As the bobstay of the leviathan swept over their heads, the men on the deck of the *Vengeance* reached up and seized it.

Several of them caught the stay and hung for a moment suspended over the rending timbers of the ship that had borne them so long and so faithfully ere they swarmed hand-over-hand into the main chains.

Jones himself made a spring for the port channels and soon joined his followers in their effort to reach the deck of the big three-decker.

Before the British crew, which was massed on the bow of the war ship to witness the destruction of the audacious Yankee, was aware of what had happened Jones and his men stood on their forecastle, and with drawn swords and pistols drove furiously at the Johnny Bulls.

The rather stolid crew of the Britisher were so completely taken off their guard that it was some moments before they collected their wits sufficiently to rally and make some resistance to the bold Yankees.

By this time the rest of the Britishers, that is to say, the few that had been left on the poop when the Britisher made her swoop on the poor *Vengeance*, had rushed to the aid of their comrades.

They were too late, though, to stop the furious swoop of the Americans who, with Paul Jones waving his sword high above his head, in the lead, had dashed right through the group on the forecastle and were now well amidships.

It cost hard fighting to gain this position, and their numbers were sensibly decreased in the desperate sortie.

"We cannot hold out if they rally and attack us in a body," Dale was saying, when his words were cut short by a roar that seemed to rend the very sky.

At the same moment there was a blinding flash of light, as if a thunderbolt had been launched in their midst, and they were thrown flat on their faces by some superlative force.

At the same time the entire forward part of the British war ship was hoisted skyward and the air was dark with the rain of shattered timbers and dismembered human bodies.

As soon as they were able after the shock, the Americans struggled to their feet and gazed about them, dazed for a moment at the suddenness of the whole affair.

Dale was the first to guess what had happened.

"You fired the magazine of the *Vengeance*," he said to Jones.

The young commodore nodded.

There was a look of triumph on his face as he did so.

His plan had succeeded beyond his wildest expectation.

Of their late enemies not more than half a dozen remained, and these were huddled forward in a frightened group eying the Yankees, as if they were some sort of supernatural beings.

They offered no resistance to Jones when he ordered them to be imprisoned in the forward deckhouse, but huddled into their prison like a herd of frightened sheep.

The smoke hung so heavily over the scene that Jones was unable, despite his anxiety, to see how the *Pallas* and her consort were faring.

Suddenly, through the dense fog of powder fumes, a voice sounded.

"Vast you British lubbers!" it hailed. "By Heaven, you have tackled a genuine Yankee sailor this trip, and if you come one step nearer I'll blow some of you to kingdom come."

The voice had a familiar ring.

It was that of old Bill Cuff.

In the excitement of the moment no one had missed him, and it filled their hearts with joy to think that their old shipmate was safe and sound.

They hailed him back and in another moment they were all shaking hands on the battle-scarred decks of the Britisher.

A puff of wind sent the smoke, which had hung over them till now, like a pall streaming out to leeward.

At what was revealed, when their full vision was restored to them, every man on that deck gave a cry.

The sea was within a few feet of the vessel's main deck.

It was evident that the ship was taking on water fast and had only a short time to live.

They were in the most desperate situation that can confront a mariner.

Paul Jones and his men were alone on the shattered decks of a sinking ship!

Anxiously they cast their gaze about the ship.

Their vigilance was barren of results, however, for her boats hung shattered in the davits.

Jones cast a sweeping glance about them.

Down to windward hung a heavy cloud of smoke.

In the midst of it he could not doubt were the two remaining ships of his squadron.

What their fate was the cloud of battle did not enable him to ascertain, but he had every confidence in Commanders Crawford and Biddle, and knew that they were giving a good account of themselves.

Although the situation did indeed seem hopeless, Jones was not the man to let the grass grow under his feet.

At any time, and particularly in moments that would have seemed to other men their last, his bold spirit rose to the emergency and had many times turned defeat into victory.

"There are no boats, as you see," he said, turning to Dale.

"No," was the reply; "it seems our doom is sealed."

"Not at all. There is still a chance."

"A chance?"

"Yes, though we have no boat, we can build a raft stout enough to hold us till either the *Pallas* or the *Concord* sees us and picks us up."

This put new hope into the little party, and they set to work to collect a number of planks that seemed suitable for their purpose.

These were lashed, as securely as their time limit would allow, to a number of empty barrels which would give the raft buoyancy in the water.

Their preparations complete, Jones threw in a keg of water and a bag of hard sea biscuits.

He would have stocked their frail craft with more water, for he did not know how long it might be before they were picked up, but time pressed.

The last preparations were barely completed when the ship gave a sickening lurch.

For a brief second those on board thought that their last moment had come, but with a brave effort the dying ship righted herself.

She was now so deep in the water that to launch the raft over the side was an easy matter.

A faint cheer rang out from the Yankees as the wretched contrivance slipped into the water.

It was very faint, though, for not a man who stepped aboard her but realized that they might be going to their deaths.

As they shoved off from the side of the sinking ship Dale cast a swift glance round the horizon.

Far to windward there was a faint outline of purple mist lying like a veil over the blue water.

The first "luff" gazed at this for some moments with a troubled expression on his face.

It seemed that he scented trouble in the dim, filmy mass.

If he did, however, he said nothing to his companions, none of whom seemed to have noticed the appearance that had caused a shadow to rest on his brow.

At this moment his reflections were cut short by a wild cry from the deckhouse of the sinking ship.

They had forgotten the imprisoned British sailors!

Their pleas to be taken off were pitiful.

Without a moment's hesitation Jones, who had the key of the place, plunged into the sea.

With swift, strong strokes he had reached the side of the sinking Britisher almost before his companions had had time to guess what he was about to attempt.

Seizing a dangling piece of rope, he swung himself easily to the deserted deck and raced for the deckhouse.

The cries of the poor creatures within were pitiful.

"Shoot us, if you will," they cried, "but for pity's sake do not leave us to drown like rats in a trap."

"I come to save you," cried Jones, as he turned the key and flung the door back.

The deck was trembling with the vessel's last throes as the men rushed out.

"Swim for your lives for the raft," shouted Jones; "she is going down."

They all plunged into the water and made for the raft. All, that is but some half dozen who were unable to swim.

One of these, a fair-haired young fellow, of slender build, Jones helped to the raft.

This man was the only one he was able to save.

The others sank like lead after a few struggles.

"Pull for all you are worth, or we shall be caught in the undertow," cried Dale, as soon as his leader and the rescued men were safe on board.

A sinking ship creates a whirlpool into which everything afloat in her immediate neighborhood is drawn.

Dale's admonition was timely.

As he spoke, the stern of the three-decker raised high in the air and then, with a noise like the rending apart of huge timbers, she sank forever.

Those on the raft had little time to watch the spectacle, for they were kept busy sculling her out of the undertow.

The man whom Jones had rescued gazed at the sinking derelict with horrified eyes.

"But for you," he said to Jones, "I should be going to my grave with the other poor fellows. Who am I to thank for my rescue?"

"My name is Paul Jones," was the quiet reply.

The fellow started back as if struck by lightning.

"Paul Jones," he exclaimed. "Why, they told me that you killed every Englishman and gave no quarter to your foes."

"We give quarter; but we never ask it," was the Yankee's curt reply.

"Spoken like the brave man I now believe you are. I was the second lieutenant of yon ill-fated craft; my name is Charles Harkness, at your service, Capt. Jones, and can I ever reciprocate your noble act I will do so."

"Thank you," said Jones, "I am sure that you will."

They were interrupted by a cry from Dale, who, for some time past, had not removed his eyes from the filmy cloud that had first attracted his attention when they were putting off from the ship.

"The fog!" he cried. "Unless we can make the *Pallas* or the *Concord* before it is on us we are lost."

There was a note in his tones that gave no doubt of the seriousness of their position.

The men pulled with all their strength for the two vessels, which were still fighting the other Britisher.

The raft was a clumsy contrivance, however, and, despite their efforts, the fog curtain rolled over the darkening sea toward them till they were wrapped in its soft, impenetrable folds.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### FACING A CRUEL DEATH.

It was a situation filled with horror.

They had no compass, and even if they had one it would have been useless to them in the surrounding gloom.

Occasionally they could catch the distant boom of guns which told them in a vague way the whereabouts of the

other two vessels, but although they pulled through the dense mist, as they judged, in the right direction, they could not seem to get any nearer.

Unless the fog lifted they had to face a situation that was unparalleled for sheer hopelessness.

Their raft was of the frailest, and even with the greatest economy their slender stock of provisions would not last them more than a day at most.

They shouted with all the strength of their lungs in the effort to attract some attention, but no answer came to their hails.

At length the sound of firing began to grow fainter, and they were compelled to acknowledge, although the realization brought with it a chill, that they were adrift on the unknown, with the vessels that might have given them aid rapidly bearing away from them.

What made it harder to bear was the thought that assistance, had they been able to signal, was so near at hand.

Suddenly from out of the fog a voice answered their hail.

"If you be English, for de Lawd's sake be mussiful an' pick up two distressed mariners!" it moaned.

Another voice, coming from the same direction as the first, chimed in with:

"We never did have no use for dat ere Paul Jones. We is Af'ican gen'lemen an' prisoners till we was blowed up. Now we dunno if we is alive or jes' colored angels."

Despite their terrible situation not a man aboard the raft could forbear smiling as he recognized the voices of Scipio and Cato.

"I had forgotten them," exclaimed Jones. "Well, I am glad they are safe and sound, for had they been sunk in the *Vengeance* I should never have forgiven myself."

A rift in the fog revealed to the men on the raft two woolly heads bobbing, side by side, up and down on the swell and holding tight to a floating chicken coop.

Loud cluckings from the interior of the latter showed it to be occupied.

The negroes were soon hauled on board, to the intense disgust of old Bill Cuff, who opined that there was something not just all right about people who could emerge from an explosion like that of the magazine of the *Vengeance* without further hurt than a little singed wool and a bad fright.

They drifted helplessly about till the fading light told them that night was coming on.

With the coming of darkness a low, moaning wind sprang up and the sea began to roll in a way that made

the wretched collection of planks and barrels creak ominously.

"What if the raft should part?" Dale whispered to Jimmy.

"We should have to trust to luck to get us out of it." replied Jimmy.

"There is another peril we shall have to face, even if we do escape from the raft."

"What is that?"

"Why, you know these waters are alive with British vessels, and I suspect that the two we encountered were simply stragglers from the main body."

"Our position would indeed be serious if we fell into the hands of the British."

"Especially if they found out that we had sunk one of their finest ships."

"See! It looks as if this measly fog were going to lift at last."

The rising wind had indeed driven away the fog mass in heavy swirls of vapor that streamed far out to leeward like strips of veiling.

From behind the driving masses a sickly moon shone out and feebly illumined the heaving waste of waters.

The men on the raft gazed eagerly about.

Toward every point of the compass they looked.

The result was bitter disappointment.

Not a trace of a sail was to be seen.

As far as the eye could reach the sea was empty, save for the frail and hurriedly put together raft that floated, a mere speck on the desert of waters, with her burden of humanity.

Jones approached Dale.

"Old friend," he said, "we have need of all our courage now, for this is something very different from the excitement of battle."

"True, it means days and perhaps weeks of impotent suffering."

"Days, perhaps; you forget that we cannot by any possibility survive for more than a week."

"True, and even then——"

"We will not dwell on it, but hope for the best. Now some had better lie down and try to sleep."

The men on the raft lay down on their frail support of planks and closed their eyes.

Not one of them slept, however.

Their thoughts were busy with various things far removed from the waste of deserted waters that surrounded them.

Toward morning slumber mercifully visited some of them.

When Dale awoke he saw Jones standing by a make-shift mast he and old Cuff had rigged up with the aid of one of the oars.

The young commander was eagerly gazing all about him.

The eastern horizon was dyed a delicate pink with the first heraldings of the coming day, and under the fresh light of dawn the heaving desert of salt water showed as desolate as though the keel of man had never plowed it.

"You see nothing, sir?" asked Dale.

Jones shook his head.

The moaning of one of the men who had been wounded struck on their ears.

"Water! water!" he moaned.

Jones nodded with a significant look at the tiny keg of the precious fluid.

Dale knew what he meant at once.

There was hardly enough water to last them the day.

Jones stooped over the wounded man and let him drink his fill.

It was later in the day that the others aroused themselves, for they all felt that it was better to drowse away the hours till they should be rescued than to suffer the agonies of waking suspense.

Toward noon Jones made a distribution of biscuit and water.

They ate and drank with avidity.

It was hours since any of them had done either.

As the sun rose higher, the glare from the water dazzled their eyes, and the heat increased till some of the sailors began to clamor for more water.

"Men," said Jones, addressing them, "we are all in a terrible position, and whether we shall ever get out of it I know not. That is in the hands of Providence. Of one thing, however, I can assure you; the first man caught stealing water will be shot."

That was all he said, but it had the effect of calming the men down and they endured in silence till sunset, when a second distribution was made.

Jones himself took less than anyone.

The British officer noticed this and offered to forego his own share, but Jones would not hear of it.

It was about midnight when Jimmy arose from a troubled sleep, and, gazing about him, made out a form by the water cask.

It was one of the rescued British sailors and he was in the act of repaying his saviors by filching from their scanty supply of water.

Jimmy was on him in an instant.

A quick, backward wrench of his hand sent the fellow sprawling.

He was up in a minute, though, and Jimmy caught the gleam of a knife in his hand as he came at him.

There was no time for the young ensign to draw his weapon.

The only thing to do was to grapple with the man.

As they closed, Jimmy felt a sharp pain in his shoulder, as though a red-hot iron had been plunged into it.

The Britisher had used his steel to good effect.

But he had not calculated on the strength of the young American.

With all his might Jimmy grasped the man's wrist and bent it slowly back till he was on his knees. Then:

"Drop that knife!"

The blade rang to the deck.

"Now look here," said Jimmy, to his now helpless antagonist, "I will spare your life this time; but if ever you attempt such a thing again I shall shoot you like the dog you are."

The fellow answered not a word, but slunk over to the side of the raft, on which his companions lay, and was soon wrapped in apparent slumber.

Jimmy examined the spigot of the water keg.

He turned it slightly so as to see if the British sailor had tampered with it.

As his hand met the spigot he heard a loud shout behind him.

It was the man he had just wrested the knife from.

The young ensign was about to order the fellow away when he shouted at the top of his voice:

"Here he is! Here is the fellow who steals the water while we are asleep!"

In a second everyone on the raft was wide awake and Jimmy faced a score of accusing eyes.

Even Jones was tempted for a moment to believe in the young ensign's guilt, but one glance into the lad's face and the ring of his voice as he exclaimed:

"It's a lie!" convinced Jones that his young ensign was guiltless of the base act of which he was accused.

"What have you to say about this?" he demanded, sternly, of the English sailor, a sinister-looking fellow, the lower part of whose face was enveloped in a huge red beard.

His small eyes, dancing with hatred, he pointed at Jimmy as he replied:

"I saw him do it!"

A sensation ran through the men on the raft.

If a trusted officer was to be detected in the act of stealing some of the precious water, in whom could they place any reliance?

"Jimmy," said Jones, sorrowfully, "I am afraid it looks pretty black against you, my boy. You know when we all awoke you were by the keg and were in the act of turning the spigot."

"For Heaven's sake, commodore, you don't think me guilty?"

"Let me hear your explanation."

Jimmy related the events as they had occurred.

"Does that sound like the truth?" asked the red-bearded sailor, when the lad had finished.

"Why, mates," he went on, "you all saw that he had his hand on the spigot when I called you."

"So that I could tell how much you had stolen, you lying dog!" shouted Jimmy.

"Does that sound a likely story?" demanded the ill-favored Britisher.

Even Jones was compelled to admit that it did not seem very credible.

"You know the penalty for such an act, Jimmy?" said the commander, sadly.

"Capt. Jones!" exclaimed the young ensign, "you are making a horrible mistake. Surely, surely, you cannot think that I have done this thing?"

"Jimmy boy, it looks black against you."

"Do you mean that you are going to shoot me?"

Jones bowed his head. He could not trust himself to speak.

Deep confidence as he had in the lad, he could not doubt but that, tortured by the thirst that was beginning to torment them all, the ex-powder monkey had been unable to resist the craving.

Jimmy buried his face in his hands.

"I don't mind the penalty, commander," he said bitterly, "for if you doubt me there is not much use in my living, but you should know that I am not a liar."

"Jimmy, we would all be too glad to believe it, but what were you doing by that water keg?"

"That I have told you once."

"That is all the explanation you have to offer?"

"It is."

The English sailor broke into a brutal laugh.

"His young life will be snuffed out, anyhow," he remarked to a comrade near him.

"Not just yet!" said a clear, ringing voice, as Lieut. Harkness strode up to Jones.

All stared at the English officer's sudden interruption.

Jones looked at him interrogatively.

"You have evidence pointing to the guilty party?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"There he stands!" the Britisher pointed to the sailor who had accused Jimmy.

"Why did you not speak before?"

"I did not dream that matters were going to turn out so seriously; besides, I was unwilling to see a countryman convicted of such a base act, but I was forced to believe the evidence of my own eyes when I saw that man drinking from the spigot of the water butt."

A terrible change had come over the face of the bearded sailor as his officer had spoken.

His florid features were overspread with a sickly gray.

Jones spoke to him sharply.

"Come here!"

The fellow shuffled over to the young commander.

"What have you to say to this charge?"

"It's a lie!"

The tone in which he said it was enough to convict the man of falsehood, but Jones let him go a little further.

"You mean you were not at the water keg at all?"

"That is what I mean; yes."

"I do not believe you. There are stains of water on the front of your shirt."

The fellow looked down in terror.

Yes, there they were beyond a doubt.

Several wet stains of the water that had dribbled from his mouth as he drank; and they made a damning piece of evidence against him.

Jones' face grew hard as steel as he looked at the cringing creature before him.

He hated a sneak, and above a sneak he abhorred a liar.

The man who faced him was both.

He turned to Jimmy.

"Give me your pistol."

Jimmy blanched.

The fate he would not have hesitated to face himself he could not bear to be instrumental in bringing on another.

Jones saw his hesitation.

"Come, Jimmy," he said, "you cannot save the man by refusing me your weapon."

"But you surely do not mean to shoot him?"

"As if he were a dog. Did he think of the lives that depended on that water when he tried to steal it?"

Jimmy was forced to admit the justice of Jones' argument.

Without another word he handed him the pistol.

Jones pointed it at the shrinking wretch in front of him.

"If you have anything to say, speak now," he said.

The sailor broke into a torrent of blasphemy.

Jones checked him.

"Do not revile your Maker in your last moments," he said.

The only answer was another burst of profanity; then, before Jones could put himself on guard, the frenzied man leaped full at him and buried his fingers in his throat.

"If I am to die, by heavens! you go with me!" he shrieked, in the tones of a madman.

The fury of his assault sent Jones staggering backward toward the edge of the raft.

In another moment they were both struggling in the water.

There is an old saying that there is no enemy as dangerous as a desperate coward.

Jones struggled with all his might to free himself, but the fellow's fingers sunk deeper into his flesh.

He felt his senses leaving him, as, completely exhausted, he made a last effort to wrest himself from the madman's grasp.

## CHAPTER V.

### HELP HEAVES IN SIGHT.

For the first few seconds after the two men had gone over the side Jimmy and the others had stood paralyzed with amazement at the affair.

As the young ensign saw the difficulties his commander was in, however, it required only the work of a moment for him to plunge into the water to the rescue.

He threw his arm about the throat of Jones' assailant, as the latter was about to sink for the last time, and forced him back.

As his head was wrenched round, the fellow released his death grip on Jones' throat and turned his attention to Jimmy.

"I'll do for you, anyway, you pup!" he hissed, as he strove to grasp the boy's windpipe.

But Jimmy was on his guard.

He forced his arm under the other's chin, and together they sank.

Jimmy was too experienced a hand in the water not to have taken a good lungful of air before he went under.

The other, however, had not, and, when they once more shot to the surface, Jimmy felt the form of the treacherous fellow limp in his arms.

He felt his heart.

It had stopped beating.

The man's lips, too, were blue about the corners.

He was dead beyond a doubt.

Nevertheless the men on the raft worked over him to try and fan some faint spark of vitality to life, but, at the end of an hour, they saw that their efforts were useless.

It was sundown of their second day on the raft that they consigned the body to the deep.

Shortly after they took their last drink from the keg and ate the last biscuit.

If help did not come shortly, they were doomed men.

All that night they sat up on their frail floating platform, and some of them prayed that aid would come before death claimed them.

Dawn, however, showed them the same monotonous level of rolling water, without a sail to break the loneliness of the heaving waste.

They spoke but little.

Men in their position have little to say; for each is busy with his own thoughts.

The wounded man groaned in his pain and implored them to give him a drop of water to moisten his parched throat.

They dared not tell him that the water was all gone, but, with the strange intuition that comes sometimes to the dying, he sat upright and, pointing his finger at the keg, screamed:

"You have drunk it all, you cursed thieves. You mean to leave me to die without a drop to ease my last hours."

It was terrible to hear his ravings as he called down curses on the heads of the men who, as he thought, had deprived him of his share of the precious fluid.

At last he raised himself up and tried to drag his wounded body to the keg.

The effort was too much for him, and he fell exhausted halfway.

They let him lie there until Jones saw his position, and tenderly lifted him back onto the pile of canvas that served him as a pillow.

Toward evening a tiny cloud appeared on the horizon.

It spread with the rapidity of an ink spot on blotting paper and soon the whole heavens were overcast with a sooty pall of dark clouds.

The castaways hailed this with expressions of thankfulness.

It meant the one thing that might yet save their lives—rain.

Presently a few heavy drops fell.

They turned their faces, with their mouths open, eagerly up to the sky that they might not miss a drop of the blessed moisture.

"We must catch some of this downpour and save it," said Jones, who realized that they might still have many days of suffering to face ere a ship or death put an end to their miseries.

The canvas from beneath the wounded man's head was spread so as to catch as much of the rain as possible.

It leaked like a sieve, and when the shower ceased, only a few minutes after it had begun, there was not more than a quart of dirty water to show for their pains.

One of the sailors stepped up to Jones.

"Are you going to serve out that water now, sir?" he asked, respectfully enough, yet with a note in his voice that Jones did not like.

"You know well enough that this is to be kept for that poor fellow," he said, indicating the dying man, who had cried so beseechingly for water that day.

"What, we don't get none of it?"

"Not a drop, my man."

The sailor turned without a word and joined his mates. They talked together for a while in low tones.

Even in situations such as that in which the castaways found themselves, men will form into cliques.

This is for various reasons on land, but among seamen there is the line that is drawn between fore-castle and quarter-deck that nothing, not even the prospect of a terrible death, can eliminate.

So it was that the British officer was in the group comprising Jones and his two officers, not forgetting old Bill Cuff, who held himself to be the equal of any quarter-deck pacer.

The crew, on the other hand, formed a little body of their own.

They outnumbered the officers two to one and were equally well armed.

"Mark my word, captain, those fellows mean mischief," said Dale, turning to Jones.

Jones' eyes snapped as he replied:

"Well, if they think they are going to put tongue to that poor fellow's water, they are much mistaken, mischief or no mischief."

"I am with you, Capt. Jones, in this," said the Britisher. "I hope that the fact that I am your prisoner will not prevent you from letting me draw my sword on your side if it comes to a tussle."

"Not at all," replied Jones. "If they do, indeed, intend to mutiny, every sword we have will improve our chance of beating them off."

At last the sailor who had approached Jones before detached himself from his fellows, and once more approached the commodore.

"Me and my mates has been talking this thing over," he said, "and we have decided that the living has more right to the water than a fellow what can't last more than a few hours anyway."

Despite the veiled threat in the man's manner, Jones did not lose his temper.

"Surely you would not have him pass his last hours tortured by the agonies of thirst?" he asked.

"We don't know nothing about that. We wants our rights."

"Well, what do you wish me to do?"

Jones was sparring for time. He saw, as soon as the man spoke, that they were in for a fight, and every moment he could avert it, while he decided on some plan of action, would be to their advantage.

The man leered at him insolently.

All the conventionality that marked the quarter-deck intercourse between officer and man was at an end now.

The two groups of men were alone on a deserted sea on a tiny and frail raft.

They were reduced to the situation of the primitive man to whom the battle for the necessities of life was a daily occurrence.

"Well, do we get the water?"

"No, you don't!"

Question and answer rang out sharp as rifle shots.

"Well, we mean to have it in spite of you, Capt. Paul Jones."

The young commander's fist shot out like a flash, and the sailor who had addressed him was stretched on the flooring of the raft.

His mates uttered a growl of rage as they advanced threateningly toward the group of officers.

They had drawn their sea knives and cutlasses, and

presented a formidable appearance, compared to the group of officers who awaited their coming calmly.

The man whom Jones had knocked down lay like a stone, as he had fallen.

This put one of their foes out of the way.

"Hold on, men!" cried Dale, raising his hand to command attention; "have you considered what you are about to do? This is mutiny on the high seas."

"You can't frighten us with your threats," growled one of the seamen. "You're not on your cursed quarter-deck now, but here, as man to man, we mean to drive you into the sea if we don't get that water."

"Well, then, you can try to drive us into the sea; but I give you fair warning that, if you attack us, we will show you no mercy," said Jones.

The men made a concerted rush at these words.

The man who had addressed Jones rushed straight at him and aimed a savage sweep of his great cutless at the young commander's head.

Jones dodged the blow and, lunging, ran the fellow clean through the body.

At the same moment, Harkness, the British officer, accounted for another.

Jimmy's sword was knocked out of his hand, and the young ensign would have fared badly if it had not been for old Bill Cuff, who seized the fellow who had struck the blow by the throat and hurled him into the sea as if he had been a stone.

Then the fighting grew so fast that none of the participants had time to observe the movements of the others.

It was cut and thrust for dear life.

The young Britisher was wounded, but fought doggedly on, with the courage of his race; and old Cuff had got a slash over the arm.

On the other hand, they had accounted for fully half their opponents, and now the officers were evenly matched.

Slowly they drove the mutineers back to the edge of the raft.

The men made a desperate sortie, but their heart was gone, and they lost two of their number in the assault.

At last they threw down their arms and called for quarter.

Jones and his officers had won.

At that moment Jimmy exclaimed:

"Look!"

They followed his gaze, and saw on the horizon a white sail.



## CHAPTER VI.

## IN THE LION'S JAWS.

She was as yet only hull down, but, at the pace she was coming, they soon made out that she carried royals and double spencers and was a craft of great speed.

As she drew nearer she revealed a double row of black-and-white ports and a line of bright copper.

"She is a war ship!" exclaimed Dale.

"Beyond a doubt," said Jones, "but of what nation I cannot yet make out."

Harkness had remained silent since the sail had hove in sight.

All at once, however, he gave a start and regarded the ship earnestly.

"I can set your doubts at rest as to what the nationality of yon ship is," he said.

They all leaned forward to catch his words.

"She is his majesty's sloop-of-war *Harpy*, and there, on the horizon, if my eyes do not deceive me, are two corvettes and a brig of the same service."

This was about as bad as it could be.

The sloop had undoubtedly sighted them, for she had backed her spencers and was rounding to as gracefully as a great swan.

"I know her skipper," said Harkness, with a side glance at Jones. "He is a man named Grimstone, and as big a martinet as there is in the British Navy."

Jones guessed his meaning.

"You mean that there will be a court-martial on board her in the morning, and the prisoner will be Paul Jones?"

Harkness hung his head; he could not tell the man he had grown to admire that, in all probability, he would be hanged before dawn.

The sloop was rounded to, and brought up, with beautiful precision, within a cable's length of the raft.

A boat was lowered, and came flying through the water toward the castaways.

As she drew alongside, a midshipman seated in the stern sheets hailed them.

"Raft ahoy! What in blazes are you doing out here in mid-Atlantic?"

"Hullo, Derringer," cried Harkness, "is that really you? I last saw you on the old *Victory*."

"It's me right enough," replied the shaver, as the boat swept alongside; "but are you Charlie Harkness, and what on earth are you doing on this Noah's Ark?"

"I owe my life to this gentleman here," replied Harkness, indicating Jones.

The midshipman bowed as he looked at Jones.

He suddenly stopped short in the midst of his salutation as his eye fell on Jones' uniform.

"Rebel, by thunder!" he exclaimed. "Old Grimstone will be glad to hear of this."

\* \* \* \* \*

"One of my men informs me that you are Paul Jones, the rebel. Is that a fact?"

Capt. Grimstone, of the *Harpy*, drew his brows together as he looked hard at the man confronting him in the wardroom of the sloop-of-war.

"It is true that I am Paul Jones," was the reply.

"The pirate?"

"I think you are making a mistake; I am acting commodore of the American Navy."

"We do not recognize such a navy."

"That is strange; you have had opportunities enough for recognition."

"Insolence will not help your cause, sir."

"I had no intention of being insolent. I merely wished to point out what even you must admit to be a fact."

The face of Capt. Grimstone grew purple with rage at the calm tone of the man he was endeavoring to bully.

"Very well, sir; if you do not choose to answer my questions, you are under no obligations to do so. But I give you fair warning that I shall hold myself equally free, and order you hanged at sunrise."

Paul Jones regarded the man opposite him with steadfast gaze.

"Is it according to the rules of civilized warfare to hang a man without a trial?" he asked.

"In such a case as this—yes. England must clear the seas of such as you."

"England pays me a great compliment," said Jones, bowing.

Capt. Grimstone's face was a study.

"Take him away!" he bellowed to the two marines who guarded the young American. "I'll have him rigged as a jewel block by noon to-morrow, or my name's not Grimstone."

Jones was marched back to the gloomy brig, in which Cuff and his two brother officers were confined.

"Well," said Dale, as the marines locked the door. "what is it?"

"They mean to hang me at sunrise."

An exclamation of horror burst from the lips of the others.

"What—without even a trial?"

"So it seems. You see, I am a pirate and, as such, not entitled to the formality of a trial."

"Who could have told them of your identity?"

"One of the sailors we rescued from the three-decker, I suppose."

"You don't think it was Harkness?"

"I am sure it was not."

"I am glad you have such implicit faith in him. For my part, I am inclined to believe he was the man who did it."

Jones drew a small piece of paper from his pocket.

"Read this," he said, "and perhaps you will alter your opinion."

"At midnight," read the note, "the watch is changed. Your lock is a simple one, and easily filed. I will convey the tools to you. Do not despair. You saved my life—I will save yours."

Dale laid the letter down with an exclamation of astonishment.

"It is from him?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"Because he handed it to me as I passed him on the way to the wardroom."

"That was the reason it was not found on you when we were searched?"

"Exactly. The only thing to do now is to wait till eight bells, and see if Lieut. Harkness carries out his promise."

The hours went slowly by, while outside their prison they could hear the monotonous tramp of the sentry.

At last they heard a sharp challenge, and Harkness' voice saying:

"I must see the prisoners."

The door of the brig was at once thrown open and the young officer entered.

He spoke to the prisoners in a sharp voice.

"I am sent to see if you have anything to say before your sentence of death is executed upon you, prisoner Paul Jones?" he said, in a brusque tone.

Jones stepped up to him.

"No, sir, you can tell your commander that I have nothing but contempt for the man who will take advantage of such a chance as brought me into his hands."

"That is all you have to say?"

"That is all."

"I am sorry; if you will give your parole that you will keep to the poop deck, you may not be hanged till we land in old England."

"I will never pledge my word to stay voluntarily on board a British war ship."

Jones saw the drift of the young officer's talk.

He was waiting till the sentry should have passed the door, after which he would not return for a good fifteen minutes; for the door of the brig was strong, and it was not deemed necessary to watch the prisoners very closely.

Indeed, the British never dreamed of men, penned as the Yankees were, making the attempt.

As soon as the sentry's footsteps had died away, Harkness extended his hand.

Jones grasped it, and the British officer slipped something hard and cold to the other.

It was a file.

Then, from the bosom of his loose deck coat, he produced two long-barreled pistols and a brace of cutlasses.

"These were all I could get," he explained, "but they may help you if it comes to a tussle."

He grasped Jones' hand once more.

"Good-by, Capt. Jones," he said. "I am an Englishman and, I suppose, your natural enemy; but we may never meet again, and I want to express to you my hopes for your welfare and——" He stopped. "Oh, hang formality!" he exclaimed, the next moment, "good-by and good luck to you all!"

The next moment he was gone.

The four men in the cell looked at one another.

"There goes a man!" said Dale.

The others nodded.

As for Jones, his heart was too full to speak for a moment.

They soon had the lock fastenings filed away, so that it would be possible for them to remove it at will.

Nothing now remained to be done but to wait till the watch was changed.

Before he left, Harkness had slipped Jones another note.

The American opened it and found that it contained the information that the *Harpy* was towing her longboat astern.

"You can slip over the stern and into her," said the writer, "and, with decent luck, get away."

"It seems a desperate chance," said Dale.

"It's a sight better than being clapped into an English prison at any rate," growled old Cuff.

"So say I," echoed Jimmy.

"Say," remarked Cuff, after a brief silence, "what about the two niggers?"

Jones laughed.

"Oh, they have gone back to the galley," he said; "I am under no apprehension that they will not be treated well, for the Britishers needed a doctor!"

"Well, it's a relief to think that we won't be hampered with them," said Cuff, who had never forgiven Scipio and Gato for the accident to the soup.

Eight bells chimed out sharp and clear.

So far as the four prisoners could judge from the motion of the vessel, it was a calm night; which was so much the better for them, if they could only get into the boat.

Silently as a thief Jones wrenched off the filed lock, and liberty faced the four Americans.

Grasping their cutlasses and the precious pistols in a determined grip, they crept along the dark 'tween decks.

Capt. Grimstone was a great economist, and did not provide lanterns for the lower decks of his sloop, except in time of action.

It was this fact which saved the lives of Jones and his followers, for, as they advanced from behind a bulkhead, they came full on the two sentries, stealing a smoke in the embrasure of a gun.

They drew back without a sound and the men went on smoking, afterward walking to the port and looking out at the sea and talking, after the manner of sentimental sailors, of their sweethearts in the green lanes of England.

Now was their time, and, silently as cats, the Yankees slipped up the companion.

They crouched in the shelter of its hood for a moment.

After a cautious reconnoitering of the deck, however, they deemed it was safe to make their dash for freedom.

The night was as dark as a pocket, and this fact undoubtedly saved them from discovery.

For, although they could not see him, they could distinctly hear the "tramp, tramp" of the lookout in the bow.

They crept aft, keeping carefully in the shadow of the bulwarks.

Suddenly Jones' foot encountered something soft.

The "something" uttered a grunt.

It was a man.

Without a moment's hesitation Jones seized him by the throat and choked him into insensibility.

It was no time for half measures.

After this they met with no obstacle till they came to the ladder leading to the poop deck.

They had either to climb this, with the risk of being seen, or creep through the main cabin and drop out of the stern windows.

They decided on the cabin.

They had crossed it, the soft carpet not making a sound, and were wrenching open one of the big stern windows that ships of that day were fitted with, when there came an interruption.

A man, carrying a lantern, came out of one of the berths opening off the main cabin.

Jones recognized him at once.

It was Capt. Grimstone.

The Yankee sprang at him like a tiger.

The British captain struggled manfully; but it was no use. Jones was too much for him.

Cuff got some rope out of a locker, and they gagged him by stuffing Jones' handkerchief in his mouth.

There they left him, like a trussed turkey, and as angry as a wet hen.

"They won't need him till to-morrow," laughed Dale, as they scrambled through the window.

"No, but he will have to postpone that hanging he was looking forward to so eagerly, I fancy," replied Jones, as he followed.

They felt about with their feet for a rope.

There was one dangling from the stern that they located without any difficulty.

It seemed so handy that they guessed their friend Harkness must have placed it there.

One after the other they slid down it and into the boat.

As soon as they were all on board, Jones raised his cutlass.

"Good-by, *Harpy!*" he said, as he cut the painter; "when next we meet Paul Jones may be arranging a neck-tie party of his own."

At this moment there came loud shouts from the sloop, which was fast vanishing in the night.

"They must have found Capt. Grimstone," said Cuff, with a grin.

"Well, if they don't take it into their heads to look for the boat, we are all right," replied Jones.

Apparently the Britishers did not take it into their heads to look for the boat, for the cries died away and the little craft was alone on the sea.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PAUL JONES' RUSE.

"Do you not see some object out there to leeward, sir?"

Ensign Downs, of the American sloop-of-war *Pallas*, asked the question of Capt. Crawford.

The young officer's superior brought his telescope to bear on the object indicated.

"Why, bless my soul, Mr. Downs," he exclaimed, "it's a boat."

"A boat!" exclaimed the other, incredulously.

"Yes, an open boat and, as I live, there are human beings aboard of her. They are waving to us. Tell the

sailing master to change our course so as to bring us down on her."

The ensign hurried to obey the order.

"Shall I signal the *Concord*, sir?"

"No," said the captain, glancing at his consort, which lay a short distance to windward, "for she has sighted them, too, and is heading for them."

"Who can they be, sir, do you think?"

"I have no idea, unless possibly part of the crew of the three-decker we sank, just after poor Paul Jones and his ship were lost."

"Do you know, sir, I can't help thinking that, in spite of our fears, Capt. Jones will turn up all right?"

"Let us hope so, my boy. We do not know but that he may have got away in the fog."

"Then might that not be his boat?"

The captain shook his head.

"So far as I can see, she is a Britisher. Their boats are always painted as is this one. From her build, though, she evidently belonged to a man-of-war.

"Hullo! hullo!" he broke off, excitedly, "what's that? It cannot be!—yes, it is, though! Cheer, boys! Cheer for all you're worth!" he cried, turning to the crew. "Paul Jones is safe and in yonder boat."

A deafening cheer broke from the throats of the men at the news that their beloved commander was safe.

Surely no boat was ever lowered more briskly than the one that dropped from the side of the *Pallas* a moment after Capt. Crawford had recognized the young leader of the American Navy.

Half an hour later Jones with his officers was seated in the wardroom of the *Pallas*, narrating his experiences with the British, and receiving the congratulations of high and low.

They had only drifted in the boat for a day, and that they had been picked up so quickly by the *Pallas* was accounted for by the fact that the American ships had spent the time, since the supposed loss of their commodore, in cruising about the neighboring ocean in the hope that they might find some trace of his fate.

The day was one of general rejoicing.

Seated on the capstan head, old Cuff entertained the

crew with a full, and not too veracious, narrative of their adventures.

His account served to fan the flame of the men's hatred for the British, and not a soul before the mast on either of the Yankee ships but was eager to tackle the king's fleet once more.

Jones and his officers had decided, after a consultation, to head for the coast of France.

They knew that the British fleet was somewhere between them and the land of Gaul, but they trusted to the nimbleness of their wits to escape them.

From where they now lay, it was a sail, provided the wind held fair, of only a few days before they could reach the French coast.

To reach America, on the other hand, would take some weeks.

As it was absolutely necessary to refit their craft, it was decided to run into some port on the west coast of France.

A course was accordingly laid and, a few days later, they entered the Channel.

The English Channel was at that time, as it is at the present day, one of the most thoroughly patrolled pieces of water in the world.

The Yankee commander hardly expected to get through without encountering some British ship doing police work, but he hoped to get by through the exercise of his native wit.

During a calm which fell when they were still some three hundred miles west of the Scilly Islands, the men were set to work painting out the ports on the side of the two Yankee ships and mussing up their running gear, and generally smart appearance, till they looked like two tired, old Geordies, home from a cruise to the West Indies.

Thus disguised they slipped past the Lizard and into England's sacred water.

About the middle of the second day when, with royals all rove any fashion, and topsails timidly reefed, they were rolling down the Channel, a dandy frigate of the British line hove in sight.

From topmasts to keelson she spoke of discipline.

There was man-of-war written, to the eye of the sailor, in every halyard and in the graceful set of her masts.

Down she bowled until she lay to within a few cables' lengths of Jones' disguised craft.

Then she backed her topsails and, losing way, settled as gracefully as a resting swan on the rolling seas.

An officer, resplendent in gold lace and brass buttons, leaped to her rail.

"Ship ahoy! Where are you from?"

Jones, who, with the rest of his officers, had donned old sea togs and no more resembled the scrupulously neat and dashing American naval hero, answered in a piping voice:

"Out forty days from Jamaica—who are you?"

"His majesty's frigate *Bellona*. Heave to, we'll send a boat."

"Can't wait; we're in a hurry."

"Hurry be hanged!" was the reply. "Heave to! and look sharp about it, or we'll let daylight into your ugly bones!"

Jones waved his hand in true Geordie fashion to signify that he would obey, and the topsails were swung round till the *Pallas* was stationary.

The *Concord* followed suit, and soon the two vessels were as motionless as the frigate.

A boat came skimming over the waves and a dandy, young officer stepped superciliously up in the stern sheets.

"Where's your gangway, my man?" he asked, sharply.

"Don't you see the Jacob's ladder?" asked Jones; "ain't that good enough for you, my man?"

"None of your impudence, my fine fellow, or we'll send you to the bottom without much ceremony," said the young officer, as he placed his foot on the Jacob's ladder and proceeded to climb up the side.

He got his varnished boots ducked as the *Pallas* gave a heavy roll, and this did not improve his temper.

"Pafl!" he said, as he gained the deck, "how these tubs do smell, to be sure. I really don't see how these fellows support life. Now, my good man, will you bring your papers here on deck? For I really cannot go into that stuffy cabin of yours."

Jones bowed and brought out, in a tin box, the set of

papers that had been carefully forged for just such an emergency.

The officer turned them over with a gloved hand.

"Yes, yes, they're all right, I suppose, and now, as we are short-handed, I shall need some of your crew."

It was the custom in those days for a nation when at war to stop even the ships flying her own ensign, and "impress," as it was called, as many of her crew as she happened to need.

Jones was, therefore, fully prepared for this, and acceded to the other's request with alacrity.

The young officer was somewhat surprised that Jones offered no resistance to his demand, but, as he had sized him up as a simple fellow, he did not see anything suspicious in it.

Jones excused himself and stepped below.

He whispered something to each man of the crew and soon the British officer's boat was loaded to the gunwales with rough-looking sailors with no suggestion of trained fighters about them.

Among them, but in their disguises looking no different from the rest, were Jones and Dale.

Under their loose smocks each man was armed to the teeth, and in nowise was there anything about them to suggest that they were anything but what the young officer thought them—a fine body of merchant sailors.

"Well, captain," said the young officer to Jones, as the boat rode over the waves on her return journey, "I am sorry to have to do this, but you see, we are at war now, and, if we can rid the Atlantic of this fellow Jones, 'the Yankee admiral,' as he calls himself, why, so much the better for you merchantmen."

Jones nodded.

"Just the same," he said. "I feel it will be my duty to protest to your captain so that I can enter it truthfully in the log to account to the owners for my delay."

"Well, of course that is as you like," said the Britisher, as the boat scraped the frigate's side. "I am sure Sir Frederick de Vere, our captain, will be delighted to see you."

Jones bowed once more, and, followed by his crew, climbed up the gangway onto the deck of the frigate.

She was a magnificent vessel, and evidently commanded by a man who prided himself on his discipline.

Her decks were white as snow and, from the red-painted tompions of her guns to the snowy hammocks lashed along her rails, she was as spick and span as a Quakeress.

The young officer who had commanded the boat which impressed Jones' crew led the supposed merchant captain aft to the cabin under the poop deck.

He ushered him, with a bow, into the luxurious cabin of the aristocratic commander and, with a word of introduction and another bow, left them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BRITISH LEARN A NEW TRICK.

Sir Frederick de Vere was an officer of the type who believed in the old-fashioned methods of doing things.

He eyed Jones with marked disapproval as the disguised Yankee captain stumped, with his clumsy sea boots, on the soft, Turkey carpet.

"Aw, my good man; stand on the deck, if you please."

Jones obeyed.

"Aw, you want to speak to me—aw?"

"Yes, I wish to protest against the high-handed manner in which my crew have been pressed by your frigate."

"Well, my good person, you are at perfect liberty to—aw—protest and—aw—all that; but it won't do you a penn'orth of good—aw!"

"No!" Jones was mildly interrogative.

"No, I can assure you, no. And now, if you have finished your—aw—protest—aw—will you have the goodness to remove yourself from my—aw—awpawment?"

"One moment, captain," exclaimed Jones, stepping quickly to the rear window of the cabin and dragging a strip of white linen from his breast as he did so.

"Why, my good man! What impertinence! What do you want to do?"

"I want you to stand in that corner."

The drawl was gone from the supposed "lime-juicer's" voice, and the words snapped from his lips like shots from a musket.

The indignant commander turned like a flash.

He faced a pistol held in the hand of the man he had fancied a harmless, old dodderer.

"Why, I never heard of such impertinence!" he gasped. "Who are you?"

"Paul Jones!" whipped out the man with the gun. "The guns of my two ships are trained on this vessel; out of the window I am holding a strip of white linen that I shall wave if I want them to fire a broadside at you."

The old captain made a move.

"Don't move, or I'll blow your brains out!"

Sir Frederick sank back in a chair; he could hardly believe his senses.

His frigate captured by a vagabond Yankee pirate!

He pinched himself to see if he was awake.

"Now go to that port, opening on the deck, and order your watch below. Quick, or I may not give you a chance."

Sir Frederick hurried to the port.

"Order the watch below," he said, to the officer of the deck.

"Order them below, sir?" echoed that functionary, surprised out of his usual unquestioning obedience.

Jones' pistol pressed the cold rim of its barrel at the nape of the old baronet's neck.

"I said order them below, sir," he repeated, with great alacrity.

The officer gave the order.

No sooner had the last man disappeared down the fore-castle than one of the crew of the *Pallas* made fast the hatch and imprisoned them, while Dale, presenting a pistol to the amazed officer's head, said he would trouble him for his weapons.

There was a glint in the eye of the first luff of the *Pallas* that the Britisher knew meant "obey," and he gave up his sword and pistol like a lamb.

The other officers were soon overpowered, and then Jones ordered a boat provisioned and lowered.

One by one the indignant British officers were lowered into it and a knife given them to cut their bonds with.

Sir Frederick was the last to go.

If he could have spoken, much new profanity would

have been added to the language of the sea, but words failed him and he merely looked as if he were about to suffer a fit of apoplexy.

As soon as the boat had received her load of brass-buttoned and gold-laced Britishers, the yards of the frigate were swung round and she slowly gathered way; followed by the *Pallas* and the *Concord*.

As the cloths filled, old Cuff stepped nimbly aft and, drawing from his blouse the flag Jones always used, the sign of the coiled rattlesnake, he bent it on the halyards.

As it broke out at the peak, the other two Yankee ships fired a deafening salute and the cheers of the sailors rent the air.

What the boatful of British officers felt as they slowly drifted astern, it would be difficult to portray.

They stood up in the boat as fast as they severed their bonds and shook their fists, with vehement language, at Jones and the craft they had lately officered.

Jones mounted on the poop rail, waved his hat in valediction as the *Bellona* heeled to the freshening wind.

"Don't excite yourselves, gentlemen," he cried, "you will soon fall in with some ship to rescue you, and, in the meantime, think over the American Navy and what it stands for."

By sunset the boat was a speck on the horizon and the three Yankee ships, for the *Bellona* was now rated as an American craft, were bowling along for the friendly shores of France.

They picked up the coast early the next morning and, by night, found themselves off Vigo Bay.

This was a great deal further south than Jones had meant to come, but the wind had blown them off their course.

During the night, however, the wind grew stiffer, and by dawn it was blowing great guns.

The Yankee captain decided to run for the coast and try and slip into some shelter.

A survey of the chart showed them that there was a good anchorage to be found in the little harbor of St. Vincent, and accordingly they ran for it.

Off the coast of St. Vincent there stretches a long, natural breakwater of shoal sand, but there is a good

channel, and Jones' fleet got through and into the smooth water beyond in safety.

They lay at the mouth of a river which flowed past the little town and, in order to be out of the reach of prying British ships, Jones decided to take his ships well up into the estuary.

They laid here two days, till the gale blew itself out, and then decided to refit the *Pallas*, whose mainmast was badly sprung, before putting to sea again.

During their stay in the port the men amused themselves ashore in the quaint streets of the old-fashioned town.

Jimmy was frequently ashore with the others, and found much to interest him in the place.

To get from the wharf to the main part of the little town, it was necessary to take a narrow and ill-lighted street that was an ideal place for villainy of all kinds.

One night when Jimmy was passing through this, on his way back to the boats, he heard the scream of a woman from one of the dark alleys that branched off.

The lad was not a moment in making up his mind to go to her assistance.

Pistol in hand, he raced up the dark passage from whence the cry had sounded.

In the light which streamed from the half-open door of a low wine shop, he saw a young, and apparently beautiful, woman struggling in the arms of four or five huge ruffians of the worst type.

They were evidently trying to abduct her, but in that low quarter of the town the screams of women and the groans of the assassinated were such common sounds after nightfall that no particular attention was paid to either one or the other.

The young American hurled himself like a thunderbolt into the midst of the ruffians.

One of them clutched him by the throat, but his pistol spoke and the man fell back dead.

His fist shot out and landed full in the face of one of the others.

The other two, after a few blows, took to their heels and Jimmy found himself alone with the girl he had rescued.

She was a magnificent creature of the darkest type of brunette, and was evidently not much more than seventeen.

Her full figure, however, was that of a woman, and there was a light in her eyes, and a look on her face, as she held it up to her rescuer in the flickering light of the wine shop, that told Jimmy, although he was not a boy who had seen much of the seamy side of life, that she had seen and knew things that a girl of her years should not.

The girl looked up at the broad-shouldered youth with his healthy, sea-tanned face with a look of more than mere gratitude in her dark eyes.

It seemed to Jimmy, too, that she held his hand rather longer than was essential to mere thankfulness.

"How brave you are, Señor Americano," she whispered, attempting to lay her head on his shoulder, although the boy drew back. "I know you are an Americano, for I have often watched you as you came from the ships in the river."

Jimmy felt his cheeks burn at the girl's almost open words of love.

"It was nothing," he said, gently removing the girl's hand from his arm; "it is the custom of my countrymen to go to the assistance of any woman who is in distress."

"Ah, but they are all not as brave as you, señor," the girl whispered, once more patting his arm with her soft fingers.

"Oh, yes they are," said Jimmy, smiling at the girl's open admiration; "and now, if you like, I will escort you to your home, as soon as you are ready, for it is time I returned to the ship."

The girl threw back her head and laughed as she gazed at the frank face of the young sailor.

"You think that I am not safe, señor?"

"I don't think the streets are the place for a girl like you at this time of night," said Jimmy.

"*Mais il est drole!* Know you not, my little señor, of La Belle Francesca?"

"No," replied Jimmy, truthfully enough.

The girl once more threw back her head, showing her full, white throat.



Then she struck an attitude.

"*C'est moi!* My little boy, I am the belle Francesca! The Spanish dancer, and I like you!"

## CHAPTER IX.

### LA BELLE FRANCESCA.

To say that Jimmy was taken by surprise at this avowal on the part of the beautiful creature, half Spanish and half French, with the wild beauty of both races, would be to put it mildly.

He was about to speak when, before he uttered a word of protest, the girl had slipped her warm, bare arms about his neck and pressed her lips to his.

Before he could protest, a rasping voice cut through the night behind him.

"Upon my word, a very pretty tableau; I am sorry to have to spoil it—thus!"

The swish of a heavy knife sounded in Jimmy's ear as the man who had witnessed the involuntary embrace he had received aimed a vicious blow at him.

Jimmy caught the arm of his would-be assassin, as it hurtled down, and bent it back till the wrist bones cracked.

The man, with a howl of pain, dropped the knife, which Jimmy contemptuously chucked over an adjacent wall.

"So, Francesca! this is the way you repay my trust in you!" hissed the newcomer, who was a sinister-looking fellow, muffled in a long, dark cloak.

"Oh, it is you, is it? Spy!" replied the girl, her head thrown defiantly back and her eyes flaming with rage as she regarded the other.

"Yes, it is I who have—thank the saints—caught you in your perfidy; but enough of this. Señor Americano, good-night. The next time we meet, I may have the upper hand. As for you, you hussy, come with me."

The young American hesitated at leaving the girl, who ever she might be, alone with such a ruffian as the man had shown himself; but, as she saw his hesitancy and divined its cause, she broke into her wild laugh and exclaimed:

"Have no fear for me, señor, I can twist this gentleman round my little finger."

This was all the assurance Jimmy wanted and, with a bow, he took his way to the wharf.

As soon as the sound of his footsteps had passed out of hearing, the man turned to the girl with a grating voice, asked her how she had come to meet the American, and what she meant by kissing him.

For answer the girl bestowed fully as warm an embrace on the would-be murderer of the young American as she had on her rescuer himself.

"Don't be an old silly," she said, reaching up and patting his cheek, "the young fellow saved me from a band of ruffians, and I did but reward him."

"Hum," was the muttered reply, "you had better keep such rewards for those who know you better. So the American was from the ship of Paul Jones?" he asked, with a sudden change of the subject.

"Yes, but why do you ask?"

"Because, listen, Francesca—because there is much to be made out of this American sailor. The English call him a pirate, the Americans a patriot. I care not which he is. But, as you know, I have lost heavily at your father's gaming tables of late, and I must recoup my losses."

"Yes, you have said all this a thousand times before; what is your new plan?"

"Do not mock me, but listen. You know, or perhaps you do not, that the British admiral, on behalf of his government, has offered a large reward for information that will lead to the capture of the bold Yankee they fear."

"You mean that you will give the information?"

"Yes, and then, when I am rich, you will marry me."

"And become the wife of a traitor. You forget that this country is an ally of the United States."

"That matters little. I hate these cursed Yankees. They have beaten me at everything, and now they are trying to beat me at love. Curse them! but I know a way to rid myself of them, and to-night I will take the lugger and tell the British admiral where he can lay his finger on Master Paul Jones and the rest of the Yankee pigs."

"Impossible! Besides, the British fleet is nowhere near here."

"It is nearer than you think. They were off St. Malo last week, and were cruising south. They do say that a sloop-of-war that Jones escaped from in mid-Atlantic is the instigator of the chase."

"You are determined to go, then?"

"Yes, I must have this money, come what may."

The girl shrugged her shoulders at his words and they parted, she taking the street that led to her house; he to the wharf.

\* \* \* \* \*

The first rays of the dawn were gilding the bay when a fishing lugger shot from the harbor and, tumbling heavily in the roll of the big waves outside, headed for the open sea.

In her sat the man of the cloak.

He was accompanied by two other men to attend to the handling of the lugger.

The little vessel was a speedy craft, and at sunset, that night, she was in view of the British fleet.

It was almost midnight, however, before they laid to, alongside a tall three-decker.

As soon as it was light, the citizen of Saint Vincent's demanded an interview with the admiral.

The sentry at the top of the gangway frowned at him when he made the request; but, when he added that it concerned Paul Jones, he was speedily conducted aft.

He found the admiral engaged at breakfast; but the great man was not too busy to draw back his chair and ask him to tell his story.

As the man concluded his narrative, the old admiral looked at an officer across the table from him.

"Well, Grimstone," he said, "it looks this time as if we really have our man bottled. Now you will be able to revenge that trussing he gave you."

The other colored furiously.

The fleet had heard of his adventure with Jones, and a smile went round the cabin at the admiral's allusion to it.

"I trust we shall meet him, sir," Grimstone contented himself with saying; "he and I have an old score to settle."

"Let the fleet make sail at once," said the admiral, when the amusement had subsided. "They will follow my ship, and this fellow here shall act as pilot."

The lover of Francesca made some show of demurring to this.

"And if you try to play us false, or if I even suspect you of double dealing, I will have you shot like a dog," added the admiral, as the fellow turned gray with terror at the prospect.

In another hour the fleet was under way, with every man on board confident that, at last, they had trapped the tiger of the Atlantic.

## CHAPTER X.

### JONES IN A TRAP.

Francesca lost no time the next morning in going to the wharf and getting a boatman to row her out to the *Pallas*.

She found everything in a state of confusion on board the smart, little craft.

She knew very little English, and therefore had some difficulty in finding Jimmy; but at last she recognized him and flew to his side, while the men winked knowingly at one another.

Poor Jimmy was much embarrassed at the caresses of the beautiful creature, publicly bestowed as they were, and lost no time in conducting her to the main cabin, where he introduced her to Jones, for she had explained to him that she had important news of the greatest interest to the American commander.

She prefaced her remarks by telling the commander that what she did was only done for Jimmy's sake, which almost made that modest youth flee the cabin.

She then related all that her lover had said and threatened, and added that he had left the harbor that morning.

"That must have been his lugger we saw, Jimmy?" said Jones.

"I only wish we had known who was in it, and what he was after," said the ensign, ruefully, "and we could have kept our whereabouts a secret till we had that new mast stepped."

"How long will it take to finish the work?"

"We cannot get it done till after dark to-night."

Jones stamped his foot impatiently.

"That means that we are to be bottled up here till the British please to dash in and annihilate us."

"Unless we choose to dash out first."

"Ah, that is the plan. You have the mast ready on time, Jimmy, and we will try and give them the slip once more."

As Francesca was rowed back to the shore, she stood up and kissed her hand to Jimmy till, to his great relief, her boat reached the wharf.

Jones and Dale took a walk out to the hills above the town that afternoon, and spent the time watching the sea with the ship's telescope. It was getting dusk when, after a prolonged scrutiny, Jones handed the glass to Dale.

"You take a look, Dale; there, to the northwest, and tell me what you think of them."

The first lieutenant gazed for some seconds at the point of the horizon his commander had indicated.

"It is the British, all right," he said.

"What do you make their force, Dale?"

"As far as I can see, three ships of the line and some smaller fry."

"That's what I make them. Well, we don't need to worry about the little fellows, but the big chaps will give us a tussle unless we can slip past them."

"You think we can outsail them?"

"I am sure of it, the *Bellona*—by the way, we must find a new name for her—is one of the fastest ships I ever trod the deck of, and the other two can outsail any of these clumsy three-deckers."

They retraced their way to the ships, and found that the work of refitting had made giant strides during the afternoon under the influence of the news that the British fleet was coming.

The English prisoners had all been put to work, and as they toiled there was a look in their eyes that showed that they confidently believed that by nightfall they would all be back on their old ships once more.

Jones paid another visit to the lookout hill after dark had fallen, and had the satisfaction of observing the riding lights of the British at the mouth of the river.

"They are waiting for us, as a spider waits for the fly she knows she has in her power," he thought. "Well, we shall see if the fly may not get out this time. I wish, though," he mentally added, "we could get hold of that fellow who went out in a lugger. I think we could interest him for a time."

When he once more boarded his ship, he ordered out his cutter.

"You are going to reconnoiter?" asked Dale.

"Yes; I have a fancy to see the Britishers at close range. In this light they will think that we are fishermen."

The boat flew down the river, urged by the powerful strokes of the men.

Not far from where Jones' little squadron was anchored was an old schooner lying on the mud.

To Dale's surprise the young commander seemed to take the greatest interest in this venerable craft.

He ordered the boat pulled alongside of her.

"She will float at high tide," he observed to Dale.

"So I noticed to-day, sir, but what of it?"

"It will save the trouble of towing her off."

"What, you want her?"

"I do."

"What do you expect to do with her?"

"Get out of this trap," was Jones' reply, given with a quizzical look.

Dale, however, seemed so tortured by curiosity that the young commodore leaned over and whispered something to him, so that the men who were pulling the boat could not hear.

Dale seemed to be greatly pleased at his commander's communication and slapped his knee, as he exclaimed:

"Capital! The very thing."

They spent some time at the mouth of the river, lying in near the bank where they were certain of not being observed, and watching the lights flitting over the water as the ships' boats pulled from one vessel of the fleet to another.

They found that the observation of the number of ships in the squadron they had made from the hill was correct.

"Hello," said Jones, suddenly pointing to a small sloop-of-war that lay moored close inshore, "that fellow has a

familiar look to me. By Jove, it's the *Harpy!* Dale, don't you recognize your old friend?"

Dale looked at the vessel.

There was no doubt of it.

It was the ship from which they had escaped.

"This is Capt. Grimstone's chance to get even with me for spoiling his hanging," remarked Jones, with a laugh, as they pulled back to the *Pallas*.

"May Heaven grant that we disappoint them all once more," said Dale.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TIGER AT BAY.

The rest of the time till midnight was spent by the Yankees in transferring bags of some substance, which they handled with the greatest care, and barrels of tar and pieces of canvas, to the abandoned schooner.

In fact, by the time the tide began to turn, they had stowed away a regular cargo on her.

At midnight the tide was high, and the schooner, which had been fitted with sails and been painted up till she looked like a war ship, began to glide slowly down the river.

But one man stood on her decks.

The night was too dark to reveal his features, but he evidently was under no apprehensions of the British, for he lolled at the wheel, as the ship slid along, with as much nonchalance as if he had been steering a load of garden stuff to market, instead of piloting a ship down a river, the mouth of which was policed by the British patrol fleet.

A keen observer would have noticed, however, that he did not, as was the custom among sailors, smoke anything.

Instead he hummed a tune of old Virginia, and the water, lapping against the dingy sides of the rickety old craft he steered, was the accompaniment.

Close behind the refitted schooner crept the *Pallas*, and the *Concord*, and the big *Bellona*.

The former was slightly in the lead.

As the man on the schooner came within sight of the

British vessels, he dropped his nonchalant air and ran swiftly forward to the stem of his old craft.

He disappeared down the fore- and aft scuttles, from which a faint glow was presently visible.

The next moment he reappeared and, running swiftly to the stern, plunged overboard.

He swam to the *Bellona*, whose sails had been noiselessly lowered through greased falls, and clambered on board by the main chains.

"Thank God! you are back safe, captain," exclaimed Dale, as he wrung the hand of his commander, for the man who had piloted the mysterious schooner down the river was none other than Paul Jones, the man the British had dubbed the "Tiger of the Atlantic."

"Thank you, Dale," he said, as he shook the water out of his clothes, "and now to put the second part of our plot into execution."

As he spoke there was a burst of flame from the bow of the schooner and the loud report of a gun.

"How did you arrange the lanyard of the gun?" asked Dale, in amazement, at the firing of the gun from the now deserted schooner.

"By tying a piece of rope yarn to the lanyard and to the rope attaching a piece of rock and throwing the whole thing over the side. When the rock, in trailing along the bottom, struck a submerged obstacle, it jerked the lanyard and fired the gun."

The report of the cannon had set the British fleet in an uproar.

The will-o'-the-wisp-like flittings of battle lanterns about their decks showed the active preparations they were making to meet Paul Jones, for they did not doubt that the schooner was one of his fleet.

In the meantime the craft that had caused all the excitement drifted silently on until she was almost abreast of the big three-deckers.

Then she was seen to change her course and run right in between two of them, because of the peculiarities of the tide.

The Britishers were taken aback by such boldness, but they saluted her with a broadside that seemed as if it would blow her out of the water.

She kept right on, however, and, before the two bulky ships could get way on them, they had locked yards with her.

At the same moment a tongue of livid flame crept from her hold and licked hungrily at the masts.

Then the truth burst on the British.

They were locked inextricably with a fireship.

Hardly a second elapsed from the time the first bluish flame had crept from the hold, full of tar and oil the fireship carried, before great, yellow sheets of fire were shooting high into the air.

The British fought like demons to shove off from their deadly foe, but their spars were already on fire and the men were leaping overboard in wild terror.

Higher and higher shot the flames, and the roar of the fierce volcano could be heard as far as the town.

The glare lit up the sea as by day, and in the midst of the panic that had fallen on the British, the sea eagle made his swoop.

Out from the mouth of the river dashed his three vessels!

Before the British knew what was happening, they were upon them and hurling their deadly iron rain right and left.

Suddenly a terrific explosion rent the air.

The fire on the schooner had reached the powder bags, with which her hold was partly filled, and she had blown up.

The explosion sent a perfect rain of flaming embers and red-hot bolts over the rest of the vessels.

Jones' ships were undamaged, for, before going into action, the sails and spars had been thoroughly wetted down to avoid their catching fire from the blazing rain.

It was far otherwise with the British however.

Their ships caught on fire in a dozen places at once, and their crews had to leave the guns to fight the flames that threatened to destroy them.

In the thick of the inferno of flames, and noise, and smoke, one of the great three-deckers, the one that had been undamaged, drifted down on Jones' ship, and opened a grueling fire on her.

On the other side was Jones' old enemy, the *Harpy*.

He had never been in a worse position.

From both sides the iron hail was hurled into his ship, till it seemed she must be torn apart.

The night was lit up by the wild light of the burning ships and never did battlefield more resemble the infernal regions than did the scene about the three vessels that lay locked together and fighting hand-to-hand.

Men stripped to the waist and stained with blood and powder manned the guns with a frenzy born of the desperate nature of the fight.

From time to time a man fell at his gun, with the rammer in his hand, and, in a moment, another would have snatched it up and prodded the charge home.

The decks were slippery with blood and dim with smoke.

The acrid reek of burned powder was thick over everything and the smoke from the burning ships dimmed men's eyes and choked their throats.

In the midst of this inferno, while the cannon belched their deadly contents, a chance bullet shot down the Coiled Rattlesnake flag of America from the peak of the *Bellona*.

It was Paul Jones himself who snatched up the fallen flag, and, springing into the shrouds, amid a hailstorm of bullets, fastened it once more to the halyards and ran it aloft.

A cheer broke from the tired men at the guns as they witnessed the heroic deed of their young leader.

The sight of the gallant flag once more waving, amid the thick-hanging smoke, lent the Yankees fresh courage.

Cheering, they beat back the boarders from the three-decker and, led by Jones, advanced to drive back the horde of British blue-jackets that were pouring over the Yankee's side from the *Harpy*.

Jones himself, sword in hand, led the men on.

With a cheer they fell on their enemies, who gave way without more ado.

Their leader alone, a gray-haired man, stood his ground.

"Do you know me, sir?" he demanded, forcing his way to Jones.

The American instantly recognized him.

It was Capt. Grimstone.

He rushed at Jones with a furious lunge of his sword, but the young sea eagle had no difficulty in parrying the thrust.

After a few passes the Englishman was disarmed and at Jones' mercy.

His sword lay on the deck, where Jones skillful twist had sent it.

The old man gazed sorrowfully at Jones for a moment, then he turned his eyes on his ship.

The American flag now fluttered there in place of the British ensign.

The same sight met his eye when he turned it on the three-decker.

"You have bested us fairly, sir," he said, in a broken voice, stooping to pick up his sword; "take the blade of a heartbroken man and your prisoner."

Jones returned the sword with a chivalrous bow.

"I will not deprive of his sword a man who knows so well how to use it," he said, with a touch of the charm of manner that so endeared him to all.

"Hurray!" shouted Bill Cuff, at this moment, "the British have struck their colors to the *Pallas* and the *Concord*, and we've won the battle!"

Wild cheers rose on every side at the announcement.

Jones held up his hand to check the noisy rejoicing.

"Hush, boys!" he said, "remember that there are brave men dying all about us."

## CHAPTER XII.

### A LAST BIT OF TREACHERY.

After a short time had been spent in putting the vessels in trim for the long voyage to America, Jones decided to pay a brief visit to Paris and make a report of the battle to Benjamin Franklin, the American minister.

Accordingly, with Jimmy and Dale, he set out for the French capital about a week after the events described in the last chapter.

After a hard day's ride, they pulled up on the first night of their journey at a little roadside inn.

The landlord seemed a surly fellow and did not appear

to be any the more willing when Scipio, who with Cato had been rescued from the *Harpy* by Jones, told him that his guest was none other than the famous Paul Jones.

He appeared, however, to take the greatest interest in his guest's movements after he knew who the dashing young traveler was.

They retired early, for they were much fatigued with the hard ride of the day.

It was about midnight when Jones was awakened by a slight sound in his room.

There was a bright moon shining through the window, and by its light he saw a face intently regarding him through the aperture.

He recognized it as that of the surly landlord.

The fellow disappeared almost as soon as Jones had discovered him.

He was not gone long, however, for he reappeared in a few minutes.

He put one leg over the sill and climbed silently as a cat into the room.

Jones saw that he held in his hand a gleaming knife.

He crept cautiously toward the bed, holding his weapon partly concealed.

Jones was unarmed, for he had left his weapons downstairs.

He decided in a flash to pretend to be asleep and seize the man when he should have actually reached the bedside.

The fellow crept on his tiptoes across the room.

In a few seconds more he was at Jones' side.

The American snored loudly in his effort to make the man think he was really asleep.

The rascal seemed to be in no hurry, for before he made any other move, he went through the pockets of Jones' clothes and removed his wallet.

The American saw his opportunity and pounced on the fellow as he leaned over his clothes.

Jones had the agility of a cat, and his leap brought him on the fellow's back.

The man was too thoroughly taken by surprise to offer much resistance.

In another moment Jones had wrested his knife from him and had thrown it out of the window.

"Mercy, mercy!" implored the man.

His eyes were almost starting out of his head in the extremity of his terror.

"I swear, I only intended to rob you!" exclaimed the innkeeper.

"And kill me, if I resisted, I suppose?"

The man did not reply.

Jones was filled with unutterable loathing for the man who would have murdered him, and at least intended to rob him.

"Go!" he said, in tones of disgust; "for such a man as you I have nothing but contempt! You are safe from my sword, or any harm from me, for such a wretch as you works out his own punishment."

The man rose to his feet as Jones released him, and stood before him as abject a figure as could be imagined.

He looked the miserable sneak that he was.

"Capt. Jones," he said, holding down his head, "I will repay your kindness by giving you warning of a great danger that threatens you on the road to Paris."

"A great danger that threatens me?" repeated Jones. "Man, you cannot frighten me with such a tale as that!"

"It is true, I swear it!" was the reply.

The man's manner impressed Jones, although he still suspected that the other was lying.

"Well, go on," he said.

"When you broke up the British fleet, you did not take all of the Englishmen prisoners," was the reply.

"No; that is true; several of them escaped under cover of the battle smoke, and reached the shore."

"You are right. They were here last night, and with them was a man of St. Vincent, a dark man; you know him?"

"Perhaps; go on."

"He had evidently news of importance, for he rode up shortly after they arrived, and they at once asked for a private room."

"Yes."

"Well, they remained in there some time, and I—well, I considered it my duty to know what was going on, and

I listened at the door to their conversation. The man told them of your proposed visit to Paris, and the road you would take."

"It is true that anyone in St. Vincent might have known of that, for it was no secret."

"It would have been better for you, Paul Jones, had it been. They decided to waylay you in this inn to-night and kill you for the reward the British Government has offered for you, alive or dead."

The man's manner would not permit Jones to longer doubt him.

It bore every evidence of sincerity.

Suddenly the fellow listened intently.

"Hark!" he exclaimed.

Jones cocked his ear and listened.

The night was very still, and the silence was only broken at intervals by the bark of some distant dog.

As they listened, neither of them scarcely breathing, another sound was borne to their ears.

It was the galloping of fast-approaching horses.

There seemed to be quite a number of them.

Nearer and nearer they came.

"It is your would-be assassins!" exclaimed the innkeeper, with blanched cheeks.

"There is no time to be lost, then," said Jones; "how many of them are there?"

"Twenty, at least. They are well armed, too."

"You have pistols?"

"Yes, two."

"Good! Now, go and call the others."

In a few seconds Dale and Jimmy, with Cato and Scipio, who were as badly frightened as on the day of the battle with the *Vengeance*, were in the room.

The landlord had told them the reason of the midnight summons, so that there was no necessity for wasting time in asking questions.

The landlord had also brought Jones' pistol and sword. Jones clapped the weapon to the fellow's head.

"You will get your two pistols and use them, too, or I will reconsider the matter of a few moments ago, and scatter your rascally brains!"

The fellow shivered, for fighting was not much to his

liking, yet he saw no way out of the dilemma but to comply.

The horsemen had nearly reached the inn, the doors of which had been barricaded in expectation of their coming.

Jones went to the window as they rode up, and in the bright moonlight saw that the landlord had not lied about their numbers.

There were at least twenty of them.

The silvery light shone on the steel of swords and pistols.

Jones could not help smiling as he saw the great preparations that had been made for his capture.

The leader of the troop looked up.

Jimmy gasped as he saw the face of their leader, for it was that of the man who had attacked him in the slums of St. Vincent.

The next moment they were thundering at the door.

"What do you want?" asked Jones, leaning, pistol in hand, from the window.

"Paul Jones," was the reply of the rascal from St. Vincent.

"Well, here he is, and here is what he has to say to you!" replied the young American, as he discharged his pistol at the fellow's head.

The bullet sped true, and the man threw up his hands and tumbled from his horse, with a groan.

This was the signal for a perfect fusillade of bullets on the part of the British, but it did not do them much good, for Jones had withdrawn from the window as soon as he fired.

"Those fellows have exhausted all their weapons!" he exclaimed; "now is our time to fire, while they are reloading!"

The defenders of the inn poured in a volley, and had the satisfaction of wounding several of the men outside.

This seemed to cool the ardor of the besiegers, and they withdrew.

They held a brief consultation, and then one of them went to the barn, and returned with several armfuls of hay, which they piled against the door.

What could they be going to do?

They were not left long in doubt.

Their next move was to produce a flint and steel.

Like a flash, their fiendish intention broke on Jones.

They meant to burn the place.

They were too close in to the wall for the besieged men to be able to shoot at them. And yet to let them fire the inn meant death.

"We must make a dash for it!" exclaimed Jones.

Led by the gallant young American, they dashed down the stairs to the door.

Jones flung it open, and the next moment they were in the midst of their enemies.

The British were taken completely by surprise.

Jones' sword had never done better work.

In a few minutes the Englishmen were put to flight, and Cato and Scipio crawled out of the garret, where they had been hidden.

The landlord was the only one injured.

Jones saw at once that his wound was mortal.

The dying man gasped out to the American that he wanted to say something to him ere he breathed his last.

Jones leaned over him, to catch his words.

"Forgive me!" he gasped, and, ere Jones could reply, fell back with a gasp—dead.

There is little more to tell.

Louis conferred upon Jones, when he heard of his achievements off St. Vincent, the much-coveted Cross of the Legion of Honor, and Mr. Franklin was able to promise him more ships for his little navy, in whose upbuilding he found his life work.

Of his return to America, and the honors that awaited him there, this is not the place to tell.

That he was a nation's hero, though, our readers will not doubt.

He did not remain long on shore, however, but soon engaged in another hazardous undertaking.

What this was, and with what wonderful nerve and dash he accomplished it, will be told in the next issue of this weekly, No. 4, entitled "Paul Jones' Bold Swoop; or, Cutting Out a British Supply Ship."



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