

the drums was heard. "Now, gentlemen, we will go on deck," the captain said, "since they will not let us alone. But if their ships could not take us I do not think that their boats will have much chance."

Dusk was closing in when they went on deck and saw all the boats of the six French men-of-war, crowded with men, rowing in a line towards them. The captain gave the order for the men to load with grape. As soon as the French flotilla came well within range the word was given, and a storm of balls swept their line.

Several of the boats were sunk at once, the others paused to pick up their comrades from the water, and then again dashed forward; but by this time the guns were again loaded, and the hail of iron again crashed into them. With splendid bravery the French still advanced until close to the ship. Then Captain Mordaunt ordered all the lower deck guns to be run in and the ports closed, and the crew to come on deck. While some worked the upper guns, others kept up a heavy fire of musketry upon the boats, which swarmed round the ship.

Again and again the French made determined efforts to board, but they were unable to climb the lofty sides of the ship. At length, after suffering terrible loss, the French sailors gave up the attempt and rowed sullenly off to their ships, covered by the darkness from the English fire. Captain Mordaunt took off his cap and gave the signal, and a hearty cheer arose from the crew. The night passed quietly, the terribly diminished crew lay down as they stood by the guns, in readiness