

fight was close at hand. Sweet is rest after strife; but sweeter still is strife after slavery and torture, hope after despair.

They waited in the dark hut, whispering, joking a little. They could hear the other slaves, in their distant quarters, chanting a wild, tuneless song.

Hall, a big New Englander, began snapping the joints of his fingers. "I must supple 'em up a bit," he whispered, "so's to get a good grip on the cutlass."

"Aye, an' mine be as stiff as wood," replied another; "but they'll limber, I reckon, when they feel the shark-skin grip o' a good hanger."

"There be no cuttin'-tool in the world so sweet to handle as a fust-class English-made hanger," said Tyler, with relish in his tones.

At last Laroche and two blacks entered the hut. The blacks carried cutlasses wrapped in sacking. Laroche carried a clay jug full of water and rum and fresh limes. He placed it on the earthen floor and felt his way to where Drurie sat against the wall. He unlocked the great chain from the Virginian's waist, and then struck off the irons from wrist and leg. And so with the other seven, working swiftly and noiselessly. When all were free, without a word they went to where the two bundles of cutlasses lay on the ground, and each selected a weapon to suit his hand and arm.