

Pressing her fervently to his heart, Captain Ellice sprang on deck.

By this time the news had spread through the ship, and the crew, consisting of upwards of thirty men, were conversing earnestly in knots of four or five while they sharpened and buckled on cutlasses, or loaded pistols and carbines.

"Send the men aft, Mr. Thompson," said the captain, as he paced the deck to and fro, casting his eyes occasionally on the schooner, which was rapidly nearing the vessel. "Take another pull at these maintopsail-halyards, and send the steward down below for my sword and pistols. Let the men look sharp; we've no time to lose, and hot work is before us."

"I will go for your sword, father," cried Fred, who had just come on deck.

"Boy, boy, you must go below; you can be of no use here."

"But, father, you know that I'm not *afraid*."

"I know that, boy—I know it well; but you're too young to fight—you're not strong enough. Besides, you must comfort and cheer your mother; she may want you."

"I'm old enough and strong enough to load and fire a pistol, father; and I heard one of the men say we would need all the hands on board, and more if we had them. Besides, it was my mother who told me what was going on, and sent me on deck to *help you to fight*."

A momentary gleam of pride lit up the countenance