

A Ladder of Swords

"Do you think we shall land?" quietly asked De la Forêt, nodding towards the Jersey coast.

"As many chances 'gainst it as for it, m'sieu'," said Buonespoir, turning his face to the north, for the wind had veered again to northeast, and he feared its passing to the northwest, giving them a head-wind and a swooping sea.

Night came down, but with a clear sky and a bright moon, the wind, however, not abating. The next three hours were spent in tacking, in beating towards the Jersey coast under seas which almost swamped them. They were standing off about a mile from the island, and could see lighted fires and groups of people upon the shore, when suddenly a gale came out from the southwest, the wind having again shifted. With an oath Buonespoir put the helm hard over, the *Belle Suzanne* came about quickly, but as the gale struck her the mast snapped like a pencil, she heeled over, and the two adventurers were engulfed in the waves.