

skipper, confronting the foe at the pass on the right of the companion way, while I took the opposite pass on the left, "you strike for life or death."

Of the succeeding minutes I have no distinct recollection. There was a wild clashing of cutlasses, mingled with the reports of pistols and the shouts of angry combatants, while occasionally a shrill cry of agony, from some one desperately wounded, rose over the uproar. Our stock of fire-arms was scanty, so that we had little with which to oppose the foe except cutlasses, while most of the desperadoes were armed with pistols.— But our men were nerved with the energy of despair, and our defences, slight as they were, considerably retarded the approach of the foe. In vain the piratical leader, urging on his ruffians by his example, struggled to penetrate into our little circle; the skipper, bravely confronted him and sustained by four sturdy old men-of-war's men, hurled him back on his followers as often as he endeavored to clamber over our defences. So fierce was the contest in this quarter that the cutlasses, crossing each other in strife, formed a bridge over the two leaders, while the blades flashed so rapidly and incessantly as to conceal the real state of the conflict. The few hasty glances which I was able to cast toward my comrades revealed nothing except a wild confusion, from which I could extract only the fact that the skipper, though wounded desperately, maintained his ground. And my attention was soon wholly occupied by my own immediate opponents, for a party of the ruffians, seeing the determined opposition made to their leader,

made a diversion in his favor, and then fought on my side of the companion way, grew as fierce as that maintained by the two leaders. Standing at the opening between the water casks, and sustained on either side by two of the crew, we beat down successively every man who attempted to pass our defence.— In this desperate struggle we were all speedily wounded, but I still continued cheering my men, for the thought of our innocent companions nerved me to the utmost. Again and again our defences were nearly surmounted; again and again, with gigantic efforts, we hurled back the assailants. Three several times was I wounded, one of my little party was shot dead, and all of us were streaming with blood, yet still we maintained the unequal combat. For the rest of the fight all was confusion.— Shouts and oaths, the rattle of blades, the crack of pistols, the dull, heavy sound of men falling to the deck; the groans of the wounded and the despairing shrieks of the dying met the ear, mingled in a wild uproar, like the noises in a fevered dream. During this *melee* I was conscious only that the gray-haired father of Ellen, taken the place of a seaman who had fallen, was fighting at my side, his silvery locks dabbled with blood from a cut in his head; and the spectacle roused all the energy within me. But I felt that our resistance could not much longer be protracted. We had suffered quite as severely as the pirates—for every man they lost there were three to take his place; while it had required, even at first, the whole of our little force to defend our barricade, and our thinned numbers could now