

He paused. "They will certainly attack in the next few minutes. I believe we can fight them off, but you must stay at your posts and shoot them before they get near the fort! Jim," he added, "you and I are not very good at shooting, so we will help the others load their guns."

Everybody was serious now. Nervously, they pointed their guns out of the loopholes, and waited. Suddenly, several shots were fired at the fort. But none of them could get through the thick walls. Then they heard a loud yell, and a bunch of pirates came running towards them. Squire Trelawney and the doctor began firing. Two pirates fell, but the others kept on coming towards the fort. Jim loaded their guns as fast as he could, but the gunfire could not keep the pirates back. Soon, they started climbing up the walls of the fort.

"Jim, take a sword!" cried Captain Smollett. "We must leave the fort and fight them in the open!"

Jim immediately grabbed a sword and ran outside. He found himself face to face with a pirate in a red cap. It was Mr Hands. Hands' sword almost struck him, but Jim jumped to one side. Then he slipped and rolled down a hill.

By the time he got up, he realised his friends had won the fight. The men were much more skilled with their swords than the pirates. Those who were not dead or injured had run off. However, there was a price for the victory. Joyce had been shot dead, Hunter was unconscious. And the squire was kneeling beside the captain. "Captain Smollett is wounded!" he cried.

