

SCENE VIII

(There is a period of some thirty seconds of complete silence during which the audience and the set are in darkness. This period indicates the passage of time and gives opportunity for the placing of a thin false front on Jack's Tavern. Then from the far right comes the sound of marching feet and the men draw nearer and stop, at the command of an officer, in front of the tavern.)

OFFICER (Voice)

Sergeant MacDonald, pick a detachment of four men, get a light, and go inside and search the place to see if anyone's sleeping in there except old Jack. We don't want to burn up anybody.

SERGEANT MacDONALD (Voice)

Yes, sir. All right, Duncan, Peacock, Cunningham, Littlejohn, fall out. Light a torch, go through the tavern, downstairs and upstairs, and bring out anybody that's inside. Search carefully. And watch out for old Jack. 'e might shoot. And fetch 'em down to us. Understand. All right, get busy. The rest of the detachment, at ease. You'll keep the people back if any of them come out when she gets a-burning.

(Immediately there is a stir as the soldiers are at ease and the four members of the detachment fall out. Quickly they light two torches, enter the front door. Their light may be seen occasionally through the doorway and the windows and when it reaches the upper floor there is a tremendous commotion as old Pat Jack awakes.

PAT JACK (voice)

What's a-goin' on here? Can't a peaceable citizen git his nappan' without bein' disturbed this time o' night? Ye fellows can't git no liquor now. Ye'll have to wait till mornin'. Ye'll jes' have to wait--

SERGEANT (Voice)

You've sold your last drop of grog in this rebel's nest, old

man. You're coming with us. We're going to burn you down.

PAT JACK (Voice)

W'y dad-blast ye, ye damnacious lowdown, good-fer-nothin' scoundrelly Britishers. I aint a-scared o' none o' the likes o' ye, Cornwallis hisself or that dad-shivered knave, Bloody Tarleton on his hoss. I aint a-goin' nowheres. I aint a-goin'---

(There is a commotion of falling furniture, interspersed with the laughing of the soldiers and the raving of old Pat Jack, and after a minute the soldiers come through the doorway, lugging the old man on his bed, which they carry out into the street in front of the tavern.)

SERGEANT MacDONALD

All right, men, put the torches to the tavern. Some of you men keep the old devil back.

(The men with the torches advance to the two front corners, apply the flaming torches, and soon the whole front is burning. The light from the fire now lights the street scene and reveals the old tavernkeeper being held on his bed by two laughing British soldiers. He is shaking his fist and screaming imprecations upon Cornwallis, Tarleton, King George and all Britain. On the fringes, as the fire brightens and begins quickly to die down, can be seen the frightened, angry faces of the villagers, mostly women and children. And now quickly the fire dies out and the scene is again in complete darkness.)