

his left shoulder that put one arm out of action. The Frenchman ducked and slipped in; but the skipper's boot on his collar-bone set him back for a moment and sent the knife tinkling to the ground. But the same movement, thanks to the little wad of snow on the heel of his boot, brought the skipper to the flat of his back with a bone-shaking slam. The clubbed musket swung up — and then the door flew open above his upturned face, candle-light flooded over him and a sealing-gun flashed and belowed. Then the threatening musket fell of its own weight, from dead hands — and the skipper went to sleep with more stars twirling white and green fire across his inner vision than he had ever seen in the sky.

It was daylight when Black Dennis Nolan next opened his eyes. He was in his own bed. He felt very sick in the stomach, very light in the head, very dry in the mouth. Old Mother Nolan sat beside the bed, smoking her pipe.

"Was it ye let off the old gun out the door?" he asked.

"Nay, 'twas Mary done it," replied Mother Nolan, blinking her black eyes at him.

"An' where bes Mary now?" he asked.