

"On the cliff to the north? Where the devil has ye been to, Mary Kavanagh?"

"Whist! Hark to that!" exclaimed the girl.

"Sure, skipper, 'twas somethin' up back yonder," whispered Bill Brennen. "It sounde. meself like a gun slammin' agin a rock."

"Would it be that stranger lad?" queried Dennis, anxiously.

"Nay, he bes safe enough," said Mary. "But hark to that, now! There bes a whole crew up yonder."

The skipper opened Cornelius Lynch's door, but not with his foot as he had formerly intended.

"Turn out an' git yer guns, men. There bes trouble a-foot," he said, quietly. Then, laying a hand on Mary's shoulder, he whispered, "Git Pat an' yerself to my ho use an' fasten up the doors. It bes a strong house, lass, an' if there bes any gunnin' ye'll be safe there."

"Ye needn't be worryin' for Flora Lockhart," said Mary. "She bes safe enough — herself an' the captain — a-sailing away in the bully this half-hour back."

The skipper's hand tightened on her shoulder; but she did not flinch. In the light from the open