

Hastings way, and God grant they have no trouble to-night, for the house lies ready to the hand of such a crew as I told ye on. A sailorman himself, Phil Hargraves, and one who had picked the Don's pocket to a pretty tune, if all were true folks heard; and ay, ay, there was that other story of a bribe in the hand whereby a Spanish prison swallowed a ship's company to Hargraves' profit. Lies, no doubt, though the story had a curious fashion of cropping up, if 'twere all a lie. If they lads who passed were by chance some of them who had saved their skins, why Hargraves is four miles out, and not a soul for woman or bairn to cry to. God save the man! Was he mad, craving supper and then fleeing the house in such a fashion? An ill-looking rogue and well rid of.'

Into the darkness, Hastings way, Martin Hughes was swinging at a man's pace, with no very clear thought in his head but that the blacker the darkness and the colder the night, the better for him till his brain got time to think.

That Mary should marry, that he had schooled himself to expect, or thought he had, since there is none a man can so easily deceive as himself, but now the blunt truth in plain words was like a grip on the throat, choking back the life. Marry, and for bread, while he,