

**A HARD KNOT. A
NOVEL. IN THREE
VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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A Hard Knot. A Novel. In Three Volumes. Vol. I by Charles Gibbon

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CHARLES GIBBON

**A HARD KNOT. A
NOVEL. IN THREE
VOLUMES. VOL. I**

A HARD KNOT

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A HARD KNOT

A Novel

By CHARLES GIBBON

AUTHOR OF 'ROBIN GRAY,' 'THE GOLDEN SHAFT,' ETC.



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VOL. I.

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1885

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A HARD KNOT.

CHAPTER I.

A SECRET.

JOHN HADDEN occupied a modest-looking house, to which he had removed on first entering on possession of his small fortune. His household consisted of two persons—a housekeeper, Mrs. Greig, whose husband had been a moulder, and had been accidentally killed in the foundry; the second person was a smart maid-of-all-work.

To this couple, the behaviour and pursuits of their master were not a little mysterious, and became the subject of much curiosity. Mrs. Greig, especially,

was eager to know how he occupied himself ; but he had cleverly foiled every effort she had made to pry into his secret, apparently finding amusement in outwitting her, and either being too kind to find fault with her for a propensity which he admitted to be a general failing of her sex, or finding the amusement too good to think of parting with her.

Mrs. Greig always asked, when she handed him his hat, where was he going, and when would he return. To these questions she always received the same answer : ' I don't know.'

He would walk out with a chuckling, genial smile, and return, perhaps, in half an hour, perhaps not for a week, or even a month. In either case he stepped up to the door with the same smile on his lips as when he had gone out, and a general bearing of having just been round the corner for a few minutes.

At home, his manner was quiet and observant. Nothing escaped him, and Mrs.