

**TWO TALES OF MARRIED
LIFE: HARD TO BEAR. A
TRUE MAN. VOL. III**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649726707

Two Tales of Married Life: Hard to Bear. A True Man. Vol. III by G. M. Craik & M. C. Stirling

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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G. M. CRAIK & M. C. STIRLING

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TWO TALES
OF
MARRIED LIFE.

VOL. III

TWO TALES
OF
MARRIED LIFE.

HARD TO BEAR.

BY
GEORGIANA M. CRAIK.

A TRUE MAN.

BY
M. C. STIRLING.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1877.

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251. d. 981.

A TRUE MAN.

BY

M. C. STIRLING.

"Trustie to the end."

"Man cannot make, but may ennoble fate,
By nobly bearing it. So let us trust
Not to ourselves, but God, and calmly wait
Love's orient, out of darkness and of dust."
OWEN MEREDITH.

A TRUE MAN.

CHAPTER VIII.

“There's a sort of wrong that can never be made up for.”

GEORGE ELIOT.

A LICE, in her simple unconsciousness of her influence on these other lives, was more nearly happy during these few weeks than she had been since her marriage. It is true she could neither forget her father-in-law's letter, nor ignore the unlikeness of her husband's mind ; but, in her anxiety to forge some chain that should bind his

affections, she reckoned up eagerly every little kindness that might form one of its links.

And Ainsworth wished to appear kind. He had coquetted willingly with folly, but he shrank from the cold looks of his immediate circle, and would fain have rectified his mistake if it could be done on sufficiently easy terms.

At first he contented himself with spending an hour or so by his wife's sofa, and consulting her wishes on trivial matters. For this somewhat monotonous duty he consoled himself by the visits that Harcourt had detected.

After the party at Kilmaley, this pleasure was over. His familiar knock was met at Mrs. Brabazon's door by an unflinching "not at home," and when he saw her in society, he perceived at once a change in her manner, not so great as to attract

general attention, but distinct enough to him. With consummate skill she avoided explanations or reproaches, and he, chafing and indignant, ended, as Maud expected, by turning to his wife for consolation.

"You're a good child, Alice," said he one night, after a long silence, during which he watched her deft fingers at their work, and thought how haughtily Maud had rebuffed him that afternoon.

"Am I?" said she, raising her pretty head, and wondering why he gazed at her so earnestly.

"Yes, you're always the same to a fellow, which is more than can be said of most of your sex."

Such a phrase as this was music to Alice's ear, and she built on it more than she would have done had she known the thought that underlaid it. She began to hope that her strongest wish might be ful-

filled, and that they two might pass their lives together with a fair semblance of peace, if not love.

As if this period were to be folded like an idyll between tragic pages, she was summoned to the Red Hall ere her husband had wearied of his new domesticity, or sought for any fresh amusement.

The Squire, unwilling to acknowledge that he could no longer face wind and weather, had gone about his usual avocations during the bitter gales of an inclement February. Cold and a low fever had so reduced him that, about the middle of March, Mrs. Ramsay telegraphed to her niece to come home at once.

She received the message at breakfast, and Ainsworth delayed going to the barracks for a few minutes to talk it over. He was surprised to see how quietly she spoke of all the arrangements which would