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ONCE AGAIN BY MRS. FORRESTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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BY

MRS. FORRESTER,

AUTHOR OF "VIVA," "RHONA," "OMNIA VANITAS," ETC.

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LEIPZIG

BERNHARD TAUCHNITZ

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O N C E A G A I N.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG man and a pretty girl madly in love. The adverb is correct. Love, like anger, is a brief madness. Love, when every question of prudence, of expediency, of consideration for the future is flung recklessly to the winds, is a disastrous form of madness.

The man is much madder than the girl, inasmuch as his passion is a thousand-fold stronger than hers. She, indeed, pretty, fair, and foolish, without much character, has hitherto been uninfluenced by strong feeling of any kind. Her lover's fire has, however, kindled a certain amount of answering warmth in her breast, and he has succeeded in persuading her that life without him would not be worth living. She is weak; she is yielding; she has a little, only a little touch of romance, and she is younger than her nineteen

years warrant. She has always leaned on a stronger nature. Until she met, just one month ago, the rock which at present offers her its support, she had leaned upon her mother; but the breast of the stalwart young soldier seemed to suggest a more attractive shelter than the maternal bosom, and, resolutely shutting her eyes to any but the most agreeable and seductive thoughts of the future, Miss Dulcie proposed to herself to repose blissfully and continuously on the impassioned heart of Mr. Noel Trevor for the next five decades.

The absolutely insuperable obstacle represented by the young gentleman's want of fortune added the necessary fuel to the flames.

Mrs. Vernon, Dulcie's mother—a thorough woman of the world, with a nature as strong as her daughter's was weak—was not in the very smallest degree likely to be influenced by any amount of tears and prayers from despairing lovers. She knew, or thought she knew, the exact value of love—so-called by rash and inconsiderate youth—and would not have permitted Cupid to unfurl one feather of his wings under her roof unless he brought substantial offerings along with his false and foolish vows. Love forsooth! Perjured little wretch! Source of abiding misery and wretchedness since Time began! Dulcie had met Mr. Trevor