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ONCE AGAIN BY MRS. FORRESTER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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BY

MRS. FORRESTER,

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ONCE AGAIN.

CHAPTER I.

"You will see her of course," said Mrs. Vernon, feeling just the least bit sorry for him. "But, before you can consider her your wife, you will have to go through a form of—of courtship, and to marry her in a church, as I would not for one moment allow the story of that disgraceful affair at the Registry-office to be known."

"I will do anything—anything," cried Noel.

"And you will have to attend at the Court of Chancery and agree to her money being settled upon herself."

Noel flushed.

"You do not, I hope, think," he cried, "that any consideration of money influenced me in the matter."

"Most people would think so," returned Mrs. Vernon chillingly.

"I swear," cried the young man, "that I never knew she had a penny; never had a thought or wish but for herself."

"I believe you have not any means of supporting a girl accustomed to every comfort and luxury," observed Mrs. Vernon.

Noel hung his head.

"I thought our love would help us to get over that," he murmured.

"I have frequently heard that theory," said Mrs. Vernon contemptuously. "But I never knew it answer in practice. My daughter has never in her life wanted for anything, and I do not think she is a girl to bear poverty and discomfort cheerfully."

Noel bit his lip and looked the picture of misery.

"However," proceeded Mrs. Vernon, "when she is of age, she will have a thousand a year, and, meantime, you will have to manage as best you can. I presume you intend to join your regiment in India?"

"I have not communicated with my Colonel yet," answered Noel; "the doctor did not think me quite fit for duty. I suppose as I did not go out with the regiment I shall have to join at the dépôt first, unless I can get sent out with a draft."

"I should think you had better go to India, if possible," said Mrs. Vernon, who, after all that she had gone through with Dulcie, felt that it would be a relief to get rid of her entirely.

"I should like it best," exclaimed Noel brightening, "and—she—seemed quite willing in the winter. When may I see her?"

"When she returns from Brighton in a day or two. If you leave me your address, I will let you know when to call."

Noel felt that his mother-in-law was behaving much better than he could have expected. He had a good heart and was smitten with remorse at the thought of the pain and grief he must have caused her.

"I am afraid," he said diffidently, "that you must have rather a bad opinion of me. I hope you will forgive me for the trouble I have caused you."

The remembrance of her wrongs rose forcibly in the mother's breast, and she said, with a burst of anger,

"Until she met you, Dulcie had never given me a moment's anxiety. She was my one hope and comfort in life. I looked forward to her making a good marriage; to seeing her happy and well provided for. You have wrecked all my hopes. You taught her to deceive me—you inflicted on me the