BAD LUCK: A NOVEL; IN THREE VOLUMES. VOL. II

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ALBANY DE FONBLANQUE

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Trieste

BAD LUCK.

A Novel.

BY

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AUTHOR OF "A TANGLED SKEIN," "CUT ADRIFT,"
ETC., ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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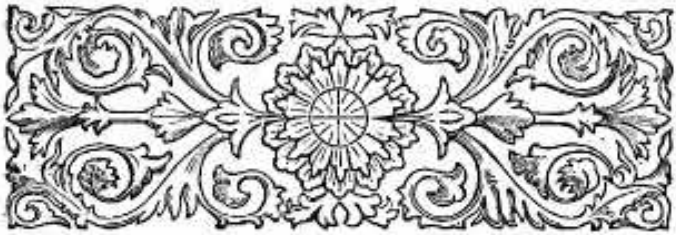

BAD LUCK.

CHAPTER I.

"MEN MAY COME AND MEN MAY GO,
BUT I GO ON FOR EVER."

IN three days if all go well, the church bells of Beckhampton will ring a wedding peal. The bridegroom to be spends his birthday at the latter place going into accounts, signing releases, and finding out how much, or rather little, of his cake is left. He arrives there just in time to see the

last of the auction at the mill houses, and to take leave of old Hazeltine. As the oldest tenant on the estate he ought to have taken the chair at the festivities to be held at the Hall to celebrate the young squire's wedding, but his passage is engaged and the *Black Ball* clipper that is to carry him and his wife to the other side of the world, knows naught of marryings or givings in marriage, and will not wait a day.

"We should be poor hands at merry-making, Master Fraser," he says, "and I'm glad for one thing we shan't be here. It's a sharp wrench now it's come, and the sooner we're off the better it will be for us; but we'll drink your health and the young lady's heartily, all the same. Be sure of that."

"I thank you, Hazeltine; and will wish

you a good voyage, and all prosperity in your new home," says Fraser. "I hope the things sold well."

"Well enough. They'd have gone better if there had been anybody after the mill, but there isn't. I'm mightily afraid, Master Fraser, you won't let it in a hurry. Why look at the Beck to-day! There isn't water enough to shake a bull-rush, let alone turn a pair of stones. And if this hot weather brings on heavy rain—as it will do or I'm mistaken—there'll be a flood come rattling down the valley, fit to tear the place down! It's always too little, or too much now; all along of them draining fid-fads."

"Yes, but those fid-fads, as you call them, have nearly doubled the value of the Framlington meadows—well, Pryor says so, and he knows. Why do you shake