

**MR. WITT'S  
WIDOW:  
A FRIVOLOUS TALE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649383221

Mr. Witt's widow: a frivolous tale by Anthony Hope

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**ANTHONY HOPE**

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"Ncaera was no longer in a condition to decide anything. Tears were her ready refuge in time of trouble, and she was picturesquely weeping." (Page 203.)

*Mr. Witt's Widow*

*[Frontispiece]*

# MR. WITT'S WIDOW.

*A FRIVOLOUS TALE.*

BY

ANTHONY HOPE,

AUTHOR OF "THE PRISONER OF KENDI," "RUPERT OF HENTAU,"  
"FERROSO," ETC., ETC.

"Habent sua fata—citharæ."

WARD, LOCK & CO., LIMITED

LONDON, MELBOURNE AND TORONTO

1912.



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# MR. WITT'S WIDOW.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HOW GEORGE NESTON JUMPED.

THE Nestons, of Tottlebury Grange in the county of Suffolk, were an ancient and honourable family, never very distinguished or very rich, but yet for many generations back always richer and more distinguished than the common run of mankind. The men had been for the most part able and upright, tenacious of their claims, and mindful of their duties; the women had respected their betters, exacted respect from their inferiors, and educated their brothers' wives in the Neston ways; and the whole race, while confessing individual frailties, would have been puzzled to point out how, as a family, it had failed to live up to the position in which Providence

and the Constitution had placed it. The error, if any, had indeed been on the other side in one or two cases. The last owner of the Grange, a gay old bachelor, had scorned the limits of his rents and his banking-account, and added victories on the turf to the family laurels at a heavy cost to the family revenues. His sudden death had been mourned as a personal loss, but silently acknowledged as a dynastic gain, and ten years of the methodical rule of his brother Roger had gone far to efface the ravages of his merry reign. The younger sons of the Nestons served the State or adorned the professions, and Roger had spent a long and useful life in the Office of Commerce. He had been a valuable official, and his merits had not gone unappreciated. Fame he had neither sought nor attained, and his name had come but little before the public, its rare appearances in the newspapers generally occurring on days when our Gracious Sovereign completed another year of her beneficent life, and was pleased to mark the occasion by conferring honour on Mr. Roger Neston. When this happened, all the leader-writers looked him up in "Men of the Time," or "Whitaker," or some other