

**BARREN HONOUR;  
A TALE; IN TWO  
VOLUMES; VOL. I**

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Barren Honour; A Tale; In Two Volumes; Vol. I by George Alfred Lawrence

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**GEORGE ALFRED LAWRENCE**

**BARREN HONOUR;  
A TALE; IN TWO  
VOLUMES; VOL. I**



# BARREN HONOUR.

A TALE.

BY THE  
AUTHOR OF 'GUY LIVINGSTONE.'

IN TWO VOLUMES.  
VOL. I.

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OF  
THE FIRST VOLUME.

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# BARREN HONOUR.

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## CHAPTER I.


### NEW AND OLD.

A VERY central place is Newmanham, both by local and commercial position—a big black busy town, waxing bigger and blacker and busier day by day. For more than a century that Queen of Trade has worn her iron crown right worthily; her pulse beats, now, sonorously with the clang of a myriad of steam-hammers; her veins swell almost to bursting with the ceaseless currents of molten metals; and her breath goes up to heaven, heavy and vaporous with the blasts of many furnaces.

Whenever I pass that way, as a born Briton, an unit of a great mercantile nation, I feel, or suppose myself to feel, a certain amount of pride and satisfaction in witnessing so many evidences of my country's wealth and prosperity: they are very palpable indeed, those evidences, and not one of the

senses will be inclined to dispute their existence. If I chance to have an exiled Neapolitan prince, or a deposed grand-duke, or any other potentate in difficulties, staying with me (which, of course, happens constantly), I make a point of beguiling the illustrious foreigner into the dingy labyrinth of Newmanham, from which he escapes not till he has done justice to every one of its marvels. Nevertheless, as an individual whose only relations with commerce consist in always wanting to buy more things than one can possibly afford, and in never by any chance having anything to sell, except now and then a horse or two, more or less 'screwed,' or a parcel of ideas, more or less trivial—as such an one, I say, I am free to confess, that my first and abiding emotion, after being ten minutes in that great emporium, is a desolate sense of having no earthly business there, and of being very much in everybody's way—a sentiment which the natives seem perfectly to fathom and coincide with.

It is not that they make themselves in any wise disagreeable, or cast you forth with contumely from their hive. The operative element does not greet the stranger with the 'eave of a arf-brick,' after the genial custom of the mining districts; neither is he put to confusion by a broad stare, breaking up into a broader grin, as sometimes occurs in our polite sea-



port towns. A quick careless glance, as if the gazer had no time even for curiosity, is the worst ordeal you will have to encounter in passing a group of the inhabitants, whether at work, or, by a rare chance, resting from their labours. There are 'roughs' to be found there more dangerous, they say, than in most places; but these do not show much in daylight or frequented thoroughfares. They have their own haunts, and when the sun arises they lie down in their dens. Indeed, the upper Ten Thousand—the great manufacturers and iron-founders or their representatives—will treat you with no small kindness, especially if you have letters of introduction: they will show you over their vast works and endless factories, adapting their conversation always to your limited capacity, becoming affably explanatory or blandly statistical, as the occasion demands, only indulging in a mild and discreet triumph, as they point out some unutterably hideous combination of steel and iron peculiar to their own establishment, which produces results as unexpected as a conjuring trick. Even so have we seen Mr. Ambrose Arcturus, the stout and intrepid voyager, beguile a Sabbath afternoon in exhibiting to a friend's child—to the officer of the day from the contiguous barracks—to a fair country cousin—or some other equally innocent and inquisitive creature—the treasures of the