

**NED FORTESQUE: OR,
ROUGHING IT
THROUGH LIFE. A STORY
FOUNDED ON FACT**

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Ned Fortesque: Or, Roughing it Through Life. A Story Founded on Fact by E. W. Forrest

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E. W. FORREST

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NED FORTESCUE:

OR,

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A STORY FOUNDED ON FACT.

BY E. W. FORREST,
LATE HER MAJESTY'S INDIAN ARMY.



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PREFACE.

In the following pages I have endeavored to portray a phase of life upon which many romances have been founded, and it has been my object to give the reader, who may be unacquainted with the *Vie Bohemienne* of the army, a true idea of the feelings and circumstances as felt and seen by a soldier in the "ranks," who gradually wins his way from the first step of the ladder to that position from whence most other story-tellers start when they adopt a military hero.

Many chapters in this book relate to what is now matter of history, and the whole are the experience of a life of active soldiering, with the uninteresting and dry details of General Orders left out. The guard-tent and barrack, instead of the mess-table and ante-room, has supplied me with material for many of my scenes. In this I have deviated from the beaten track, and hope the reader may find that in so doing I have not injured the interest of the narrative.

THE AUTHOR.



NED FORTESCUE;

OR,

ROUGHING IT THROUGH LIFE.

CHAPTER I

"Omne bene sine pena
Tempus est ludendi;
Venit hora absque morte,
Libros deponendi."

BURST joyfully from the throats of at least a dozen youths of various ages, from eight to eighteen, who crowded the in and out sides of the smart stage coach, with its splendid four grey horses, on the morning before Christmas. Among this happy group, figured conspicuously my brother and your humble servant, comfortably located in the rumble, which afforded us an excellent view of the surrounding country as we bowled along the turnpike road to London. As we turned out of the little village of Pinner, through an opening in the now leafless trees, we caught sight of the numerous gables and quaint old chimneys of the Manor House, where, for the past six months, our preceptor, the learned Dr. Bogue, had endeavored to inculcate in our minds the beauties of Johnson, Lindley Murray, vulgar fractions, and scraps of classic lore. The glimpse was but a short one; and, as the scene faded away in the distance, it passed from my memory—my thoughts being turned to the coming festivities, the pantomimes, and the sights that we were usually indulged in during the vacation, at this season of the year.

On reaching the metropolis, we were met by my father, and

conveyed home; not to the one we had left in the summer, but to one of more moderate pretensions in Chelsea. The reason of this change was not explained to us, nor did I think of enquiring, being engrossed in my own anticipations of coming pleasures during the holidays; the greater portion of which I was to spend with my grandfather and uncle, who were merchants, and had their establishment at the West End of London. At the termination of the holidays it turned out that we were not to return to school. Some financial difficulties having arisen—some speculation in which my father was engaged, by which he was a considerable loser; so much so, that his affairs became somewhat embarrassed—and he came to the determination of quitting England, in hopes of rebuilding his fortune in one of the colonies. After several pros and cons it was decided that the family should proceed to Canada, early in the summer. This being the case, it was not deemed expedient or necessary that we should return to school; and I was permitted, much to my delight, to remain at my grandfather's. A few days prior to the departure of the family for the colonies, an arrangement had been entered into by my relatives for my remaining in England. This suited me exactly. The pleasures of a London life had more attractions for me than a trip to the New World, and so I remained behind. My uncle was of a cheerful turn of mind, and fond of public amusements and exhibitions generally. When visiting these places I was usually his companion; consequently I soon acquired a taste for such things (so natural in youth). My grandfather was one of the old school, plodding, methodical, and punctual in his business, to which he devoted all his energies, seldom relaxing on the score of pleasure; a man of strict integrity, an exemplary father, and a thorough good man every way. On Sunday mornings he regularly attended Divine Service; then, after dinner, his custom was to stroll out of town to Hornsey, Highgate, Hampstead, Battersea, Kew, or some other of the suburban localities, and in some quiet little hostelry, snugly

ensconced in a shady nook or bower, he would enjoy his glass of ale, and smoke his long clay pipe, as was customary among men of his class some thirty years ago. I always attended him on those peregrinations, and thus I acquired a thorough knowledge of the environs of London. For the first two or three years I enjoyed this sort of life exceedingly. At my grandfather's, being of an enquiring disposition, I was continually in the manufactory, asking questions of the *employés* concerning the manufacturing of the different articles they were preparing for shipment to foreign ports—in fact I obtained a considerable insight into the business. But I was advancing towards manhood, and I began to think what my future lot in life must be. I had always had a strong dislike to trade or commercial speculations of any kind. The Church was out of the question, and the study of law I had a strong aversion to ; as for medicine or anatomy, I turned from them with almost loathing. While revolving these matters in my own mind—to decide what I was most fitted for—an actor appeared upon the scene that settled this point, at least for a time. My brother, some eighteen months older than myself, and who had chosen for his profession the service of the Merchant Marine, arrived with his vessel in the London Docks. This was a source of much pleasure to me, as the vessel had to remain in dock all the winter. Of course my brother was anxious to hear and see all that could be seen of London life during his stay, having been at school nearly all the time prior to the family's departure from England, not having enjoyed the same facilities that I had for witnessing the gaieties of that very gay city ; so I became his *chaperon*, and a right jolly time we had of it. Frequently, when his duties compelled him to remain on board by night as well as by day, I would keep him company ; and in the comfortable cabin, with a cigar and some wine, would I listen to his funny yarns about Canada and the Canadians. His description of different ports he had visited highly interested me, and I began to ask myself whether it would not be much