

**A SEARCH FOR A SECRET;
A NOVEL; IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. III**

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A Search for a Secret; A Novel; In Three Volumes; Vol. III by G. A. Henty

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G. A. HENTY

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A NOVEL; IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. III**

A SEARCH FOR A SECRET.

I Nobel.

BY

G. A. HENTY.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II



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CHAPTER I.

GREAT CHANGES.

NOW that I have finished the account of the last of the series of unsuccessful attempts which were made to find the will, I must hurry over the subsequent events of my life in a much briefer and more concise way. It is now nearly six years since Robert Gregory died, and I must content myself with a mere sketch of what has taken place in that time; for this my history has already spun out to a most unreasonable length, many times surpassing the limits I proposed to myself when I first sat down with the intention of writing it. But my pen has run on and on, as I recalled all the past events of my life; and I feel every day, when I see

the mass of manuscript which has accumulated in my drawer—for my desk has long since been too small to contain its growing bulk—that the chances that any one will ever take the trouble to read it through, are growing fainter and fainter every day.

However, should it be so, my task has served its purpose. It has, by chaining my attention to the period of which I have been writing, saved me from many an hour of sorrowful thought, and has served as a break to the monotony of many a weary day. It has, too, often served as an excuse for me to seclude myself in my own room, when my spirits have felt unequal to take part in the constant flow of tittle-tattle and harmless gossip, which forms the staple of the conversation of those with whom my life is now cast, and is likely, I hope, to remain to the end.

After I came back from our three months' trip on the continent, with my health greatly restored, my spirits rose proportionately; and as I had nothing to throw me back again into my old state, with the exception of the shock I received at the news of Angela Harmer's death, I really began to look at things in a more hopeful way, and

to think that the eight years—no, the seven years and a half—I was getting very particular as to dates—which were to elapse before Percy started on his return from India, were not such a hopelessly long time to look forward to after all.

By the way, I did not mention in its proper place that he started with his regiment for India while we were on the continent. Poor Percy! he was terribly disappointed and grieved that he could not see me before he sailed. But we were in Italy at the time he received his order, and as he had very short notice, it was quite out of the question that he could come for the purpose.

I, too, was very sorry that it so happened, and had we been in England I certainly should have made no objection to our meeting; and yet the interview would have been so painful to us both, that although I was very sorry I did not see him, I was yet sure that it was for the best that we should not meet. My letters from him, except during the voyage, came regularly every three months, and it did not seem nearly so hard hearing at these long intervals—now that he was so very far off—as it had done while he was within a day's journey of