

**FAIRER THAN A FAIRY,  
A NOVEL, IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. II**

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Fairer Than a Fairy, a Novel, in Three Volumes, Vol. II by James Grant

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**JAMES GRANT**

**FAIRER THAN A FAIRY,  
A NOVEL, IN THREE  
VOLUMES, VOL. II**



# FAIRER THAN A FAIRY.

J. Nobel.

BY

JAMES GRANT,

AUTHOR OF

"UNDER THE RED DRAGON," "THE ROMANCE OF WAR," ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Vol. II.



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# FAIRER THAN A FAIRY.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

CHANDPAUL GHAUT.

WE lost sight of the land for a little time, and encountered a heavy head-wind after passing the low headland named Point Palmyras ; but next morning saw us off the Sandheads, where we received on board the pilot who was to conduct us up the Hooghly, which we were now entering under half steam with a fair wind, and we were all on deck betimes to 'sniff' the land of our exile, and exchange congratulations that we were so soon to leave our floating prison, and already, in anticipation, our men were cheerily beginning to pack and strap their knapsacks below.

On our starboard bow there loomed dimly

a low flat cluster of islands, the soil of which is merely stiff black mud, amid the salt ooze of which the alligators revel, and the Java fern, the Buckra palm, and the samphire grasses grow. This is the Ganga Saugor of poor Leyden's beautiful poem, and which he anathematises as the place where human victims were exposed by the superstitious Hindoos :

'On sea-girl Saugor's desert isle,  
Mantled with thickets dark and dun,  
May never moon or starlight smile,  
Nor ever beam the summer sun !'

Poets have sung fluently of the beauty of the Ganges, but this deltoid of the mighty river, in addition to being both dangerous and difficult for navigation, owing to its numerous sand-banks, which are constantly shifting their relative positions, has shores that are totally devoid of interest, most desolate and unlovely, though always hailed with delight after the long voyage from Europe ; and merrily we ran along them, with sail, steam, and tide, till we came to anchor for a brief space at Kedgerree, on the western bank of the stream—a town in a

swampy and unhealthy place, presenting to the eye a dismal and unbroken line of dense black wood and thicket.

To me the Hooghly looked swollen and brown ; the sky was black and louring ; and the shore on either side, as the stream narrowed, seemed fitting abodes for the grim Fever King. However, as we drew nearer the city of palaces, the clouds dispersed ; the sun shone out hotly and fiercely, glowing on the land, which seemed to quiver and vibrate in its sheen, and on the river, which at times appeared to become a prismatic tide of flowing diamonds, rubies and topazes ; and now a stout awning was rigged on the poop of the Punniar.

Fruit-boats with black and almost naked steersmen and paddlers were now coming thick about the ship ; and I could perceive that as the banks narrowed, they increased in beauty and fertility.

As we bore on, the scenery became indeed lovely ; rich and deep were the hues of the Indian foliage on the banks of the stream, which in some places were too densely wooded to permit the erection of houses ;