

**FAIRER THAN A FAIRY;
A NOVEL; IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. I**

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Fairer than a Fairy; A Novel; In Three Volumes; Vol. I by James Grant

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JAMES GRANT

**FAIRER THAN A FAIRY;
A NOVEL; IN THREE
VOLUMES; VOL. I**

FAIRER THAN A FAIRY.

J. Nobel.

BY

JAMES GRANT,

AUTHOR OF

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

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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FAIRER THAN A FAIRY.

CHAPTER I.

PROMOTED.

“PRINCE CONSORT'S Rifle Brigade; Lieutenant Lancelot P. Rudkin to be captain, vice Paget deceased.” So says the *Gazette*;¹ I added, after reading my own name and laying down the *Times* with a certain emotion of satisfaction mingled with honest regret.

‘So you are a captain now?’ said Henriette Guise, looking up at me with an indescribable smile.

‘A captain, yes. But poor Paget—I knew him well.’

‘What has he died of, think you?’

‘Fever, too probably. Every fellow dies of fever where that battalion of ours is quartered at present.’

‘And shall you join it there?’ she asked, in a sweet clear voice, and with a little anxiety of tone—at least so I flattered myself.

‘No; the battalion to which I shall now belong is up country in India—at Allahabad, I think.’

‘And you must join it there?’

‘Undoubtedly.’

The girl made no answer; but I could see that her breast heaved softly, her dark lashes drooped, and a little flush crossed her cheek.

‘Will—will this promotion shorten your leave?’ she asked, after a thoughtful pause that implied a good deal.

‘Oh, no.’

Circumstanced as Henriette and I were, I felt that she had a right to take a greater interest in my movements and affairs than her simple words expressed, and that this was the time to say a great deal more than these two brief monosyllables; but many pressing considerations fettered my tongue, and crushed the best emotions of my heart.

We were seated in an oriel window of the drawing-room at old Thorsgill Hall. The

evening sun was streaming through it, lighting up the rare beauty of my companion—a beauty which was high in class and very remarkable in character, possessing what some one terms ‘the magic of luminous darkness’ about it. ‘But,’ says another writer, ‘it is sorry work to attempt to describe beauty. Easy enough to write down a list of features, and say that, amalgamated, they look well; but *expression* is not to be sought in so many words; and without expression life is wanting.’

In figure Henriette Guise was rather undersized, and—as she is *not* my heroine—I may assert with confidence that her general loveliness struck one chiefly by its rare quality, and it was purely patrician; that her form was perfect, and her hands the finest I had ever seen. Her complexion was wonderfully delicate and white, though her hair and eyes were deeply dark, with long black lashes that turned upward at the tips, and strongly defined and nearly straight dark eyebrows, that almost met over her delicately-pointed nose; and this imparted great character to her pale oval and animated face.