
Fairy Alice

Fitzgerald Percy Hetherington

Title: Fairy Alice

Author: Fitzgerald Percy Hetherington

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FAIRY ALICE.

BY

PERCY FITZGERALD, M.A.,

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"BELLA DONNA," &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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FAIRY ALICE.

Book the First.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE BRUCE FAMILY.

THE Bruce family were "Scotch to the backbone"—a sentiment often uttered by the head of that house, at the end of his dinner-table, at the window of his club, and on the broad terraces of his fair gardens. Down this dinner-table the Bruce eye rested complacently on massive silver *épergnes* and candelabra (had he been a thoroughly vulgar "creature," he would have said, "Solid silver, sir! solid silver, sir!"); in that

club window the Bruce figure stood close by the figures of noble lords and high commoners, and to the eye of the people in the street was framed in the same plate glass; and from the terrace corner where Bruce stood with the listening friend, he could look back across a charming plaisance, laid out in glowing rings of scarlet and blue, across "ornamental waters" and vases and statues, to the "Castle," with its towers, and gables, and flag flying, and its delicate airy greenhouse, running out to the right, glittering and sparkling as if it were made of crystal. Down would come Bruce's stick, which had been flourishing in the air, and pointing out all these beauties, on the gravel; and Bruce himself would say, "Sir, I put every stone there together; this place was a swamp, sir, before I came and drained it. There wasn't a tree, sir, between this and Houghton. I planted that clump there, sir, on the hill. I don't think there was a blade of grass for two miles round! I did

it all, sir ; I suppose there is fifty thousand pounds sunk in that swamp, sir ; and—and —when I began, sir, I vow to God, I hadn't two sixpences to rub one on the other."

Perhaps it might have been better if he had had, or at least, not so often flourished this early poverty before his audience. For the fact was, that all these fine things which the stick pointed out, had been purchased by hard earned money, which was honourable enough ; but the hard earned money had been acquired in that dreadful social "Seven Dials," TRADE. It had helped him to the "solid silver" épergnes, to the privilege of looking through the club plate glass, to the Castle and grounds, but there was more wanting which it could not get for him — wealth so "rank" and "strong" was not agreeable to fashionable stomachs. Though the Bruce arms were on the flag, and flapped and fluttered like a heavy mainsail in every breeze, the story was accepted doubtfully ; it could not help