

COUSIN FAN'S FIRST LOVER.

BY T. D. F.

FIRST LOVER! no, I am wrong, first off I should say, for no one could tell who Fan's first lover was, for they came, and came from her dancing school days, when rosy-cheeked, smooth-haired boys contended with pale, classic faced, curly pated youths, for the honor of her hand in the quadrille; and why it was no one could tell, for Fan most certainly was not at all pretty; she had not a good feature in her face, and what the charm was I never could define; her friends and admirers, when called upon to tell what it was, could only reply, it was a certain "*Je ne sais quoi*," which answer left the matter as unexplained as ever.

Fan and I were cousins and schoolmates, but as different as it was possible to be. I often looked at her and wondered why it was that every body loved her. I most certainly had the advantage of her in form and feature, but no one cared for that; at dancing school there was no rush, no pre-engagement for my hand, though the master always praised me for my steps; my pirouettes and "*pas de seuls*," were the admiration of all the visitors; I kept time perfectly, while poor Fan, having no ear for music, always began before she should, and was done with her part long before the others; but that mattered not; she had always a bright word or look for her partner, and even if he was ever so sheepish, and hated to be conspicuous by wrong-timed movements, he could not be annoyed at it.

Wild and untutored was Fanny—a favorite with all her young companions, but sadly often in disgrace with her teachers. She was volatile and thoughtless, and recked not of future consequences. She enjoyed a ramble far better than her studies; and, though possessing a good natural capacity, she was never at the head of her class or studies, while I was always prompt and prepared. School days always pass rapidly enough; and Fan's ended sooner than they should; for a sudden change in her father's arrangements removed her from her city home, to a far distant, secluded, but lovely country village.

"What makes you look so vexed, Fan?" said I to her, as she came into my room, and I saw a dark frown clouding her usually happy face.

"It is enough to annoy a saint; and even you

Lizzie would be vexed if you were teased as much as I am. I have just been to see Blanche Morin, and what do you think? You know the ring of my hair she coaxed from me the other day? What did she do, but give it to Ernest! I chided her for it; but she looked up so imploringly, with her sweet blue eyes, and wondered why I was not willing her dear, dear brother Ernest should have the ring, when he was such a good friend of mine; that I was half ashamed of myself. But then, she went on to tell me, that Joe Jones saw the ring in Ernest's possession, and knew the hair. He asked him, in a quiet way, to let him look at it; and then, when he got it, he would not return it to him; and so he wears it on his odious little finger. What shall I do, Lizzie? He shall not keep it." And Fan's eyes sparkled, and she stamped her, not very small, foot with vexation.

"It will teach you a good lesson, Fan, not to give rings of your hair to sisters who have brothers. You might have known, if Ernest Morin knew Blanche had the ring, he would get it from her, for you cannot but be aware that all his affections are set upon you."

"Nonsense, Lizzie! you see a lover in every one that speaks to me. It would destroy all my comfort, and I should be constantly under restraint, if I magnified every polite speech and act—every bouquet given or sent—into a declaration of love. No; I never will believe a man really loves me, till he tells me so. This removes the restraint I might otherwise feel; and I can be frank and friendly with all."

"Ah! Fan, you deceive yourself, or you try to do so; and I fear me much, if you continue to reason in this way, you will get the reputation of a coquette, which I know you do not deserve. You run the risk, too, of deeply wounding the feelings of those whom you really respect. You like Ernest, as a friend; his gentle delicacy and refinement please you; but you could never think of him as a *fiancé*. Yet, can you avoid seeing that he has given the whole treasure of his warm and loving heart to you? he lives but in your presence; light and joy sparkle in his eyes when he meets you, and, though he has too much respect for you to express it in any open manner,