

## FORTUNE'S FAVOURITE.

BY T. D. P.

"Alice, my beloved, why wilt thou cloud our parting by this sadness, and these vain regrets? Look cheerfully upon me, and bid me God speed, then shall I go doubly armed to meet the perils I may have to encounter in my onward course."

The beautiful girl thus addressed raised her head from her lover's shoulder, and brushing the tears from her dark eyes, attempted to assume a sudden cheerfulness of manner; but her feelings were not to be controlled, and between convulsive sobs she murmured forth:

"Oh, Robert! how can you wish to see me smile, on this the saddest day I have ever known? Life has been a beautiful picture to me heretofore, a bright and sunny landscape; but the dark cloud is now gathering over me, and I have a weight upon my heart which tells me it will never be blithe again. If you love me, Robert, as you have often said you did, why will you not give up these promptings of ambition, and content you with the happy and quiet life we might lead here?"

"It is for your sake, dearest Alice, that I go to seek a brighter fortune; you are too lovely to live always in this secluded valley; I am but a younger brother, and could scarce give you, were I to remain here, the comforts of life, much less the elegancies with which you should be surrounded; let me but go with your blessing for my comfort, and your remembrance for my safeguard, and fear not but I shall return to you with a heart as devoted, and a fortune more worthy your acceptance. There is that within me which tells me I am intended for higher things than await me here, and surely it cannot be wrong in me to follow the promptings of a laudable ambition."

"Ah! Robert, it is then ambition, not love, that leads you from me, and can you wonder that I have fears and doubts? New scenes will be opened to you; the army or the court may shower their attractions upon you; and you may find among the high-born and the affluent, those that will make you forget the wildflower you have so long cherished and loved."

"Peace, Alice!" said the young man, a cloud

of displeasure darkening his handsome face; "let not such a suspicion cross your mind. Have I not loved you from childhood? When you were a tottling thing, scarce higher than my knee, did I not gather the fairest flowers and ripest fruits for my wee wife? And have we not, with coming years, shared each thought and feeling? Have we not been a bye-word to the country people for our love and devotion? Who but I, has guided your steps up the steep mountain side, or roamed with you through the lovely valleys of our native home? Oh, no, Alice! this feeling is stronger in my heart than life itself, and nothing can annihilate it but death. Then, dearest, cheer up, and let not our parting be so sad as to throw a gloom over my otherwise bright prospects."

"But you have not told me, Robert, what your plans and hopes are; you go forth into the world a stranger and alone; who will you find to be your friend?"

"My father," replied the youth, "was in early life, the most intimate friend of Lord Hay; he rendered him at the risk of his life an essential service; and now, for my sake, and in compliance with his request, he ventures to ask his influence for my advancement."

"You go, then, to London," said Alice, in a faint voice, as if her heart misgave her still more at the certain knowledge of his destination.

"Yes, dearest; but our separation shall not be long. In a year from this day, be my fortune good or ill, I will be with you at this our sweet trysting spot, when I hope to be in a situation to claim this dear hand. Then shall I transplant my lily to a more genial clime, where, from the humble flower of the valley, she will become the queen of the garden, yet retaining all her purity and sweetness."

It was a lovely spot, where these two lovers sat, and had been their trysting-place for many a year; it seemed as if nature had delighted to make it a meet temple for the loves of these young and innocent creatures. A little burn ran sparkling and wimpling through it, forming nimble cascades, as it dashed over its rocky bed; and lofty trees sheltered it from the noonday