

## LITERATURE.

### AFAR IN THE DESERT.

BY THOMAS PRINGLE.

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,  
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:  
When the sorrows of life the soul o'ercast,  
And, sick of the present, I turn to the past;  
And the eye is suffused with regretful tears,  
From the fond recollections of former years;  
And the shadows of things that have long since fled,  
Flit over the brain like the ghosts of the dead—  
Bright visions of glory that vanished too soon—  
Day-dreams that departed ere manhood's noon—  
Attachments by fate or by falsehood reft—  
Companions of early days lost or left—  
And my Native Land! whose magical name  
Thrills to my heart like electric flame;  
The home of my childhood—the haunts of my prime;  
All the passions and scenes of that rapturous time,  
When the feelings were young and the world was new,  
Like the fresh bowers of Paradise opening to view!  
All—all now forsaken, forgotten, or gone;  
And I, a lone exile, remembered of none,  
My high aims abandoned, and good acts undone—  
Aweary of all that is under the sun;  
With that sadness of heart which no stranger may scan,  
I fly to the Desert afar from man.

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,  
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side;  
When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,  
With its scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife;  
The proud man's frown, and the base man's fear;  
And the scorner's laugh, and the sufferer's tear;  
And malice, and meanness, and falsehood and folly,  
Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy;  
When my bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,  
And my soul is sick with the bondman's sigh—  
Oh, then! there is freedom, and joy, and pride,  
Afar in the Desert alone to ride;  
There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,  
And to bound away with the eagle's speed,  
With the death-fraught firelock in my hand,  
(The only law of the Desert land);  
But 'tis not the innocent to destroy,  
For I hate the huntsman's savage joy.

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,  
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side;  
Away—away from the dwellings of men,  
By the wild deer's haunt, and the buffalo's glen;  
By valleys remote, where the oribi plays;  
Where the gnou, the gazelle, and the hartebeest graze;  
And the gemsbok and eland unhunted recline  
By the skirts of gray forests o'ergrown with wild vine;  
And the elephant browses at peace in his wood;  
And the river-horse gambols unscared in the flood;  
And the mighty rhinoceros wallows at will  
In the *Vley*, where the wild ass is drinking his fill.

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,  
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:  
O'er the brown Karroo where the bleating cry  
Of the springbok's fawn sounds plaintively;  
Where the zebra wantonly tosses his mane,  
In fields seldom freshened by moisture or rain;  
And the stately koodoo exultingly bounds,  
Undisturbed by the bay of the hunter's hounds;  
And the timorous quagha's wild whistling neigh  
Is heard by the brak fountain far away;  
And the fleet-footed ostrich over the waste  
Speeds like a horseman who travels in haste;  
And the vulture in circles wheels high overhead,  
Greedy to scent and to gorge on the dead;  
And the grisly wolf and the shrieking jackal,  
Howl for their prey at the evening fall;  
And the fiend-like laugh of hyenas grim,  
Fearfully startles the twilight dim.

Afar in the Desert I love to ride,  
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side:  
Away—away in the wilderness vast,  
Where the white man's foot hath never passed,  
And the quivered Koranna or Bechuan  
Hath rarely crossed with his roving clan:  
A region of emptiness, howling and drear,  
Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear;  
Which the snake and the lizard inhabit alone,  
And the bat flitting forth from his old hollow stone;  
Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub takes root,  
Save poisonous thorns that pierce the foot:  
And the bitter melon, for food and drink,  
Is the pilgrim's fare by the Salt Lake's brink:  
A region of drought, where no river glides,  
Nor rippling brook with osiered sides;  
Nor reedy pool, nor mossy fountain,  
Nor shady tree, nor cloud-capped mountain,  
Are found—to refresh the aching eye:  
But the barren earth and the burning sky,  
And the black horizon round and round,  
Without a living sight or sound,  
Tell to the heart, in its pensive mood,  
That this is—Nature's Solitude.

And here—while the night-winds round me sigh,  
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,

As I sit apart by the caverned stone,  
Like Elijah at Horeb's cave alone,  
And feel as a moth in the Mighty Hand  
That spread the heavens and heaved the land—  
A 'still small voice' comes through the wild  
(Like a father consoling his fretful child),  
Which banishes bitterness, wrath, and fear—  
Saying 'Man is distant, but God is near!'

### GERALDINE FITSMAURICE.

FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A RETIRED BARRISTER.

(Concluded.)

Recent shadows had fallen on our friendship. Eugene was still kind when we met, but there were times when he seemed to wish I should not visit him. I had been answered with "not at home" by his confidential servant, and these were sufficient causes to conclude my calls; besides, being conscious of having given him no offence, I felt a kind of smothered wrath at such ceremonious cutting. He was not at the ball—a circumstance which rather surprised me, as the invitations were general; and I mentally discussed it while helping myself to a glass of negus at one of the side tables, when a gentleman stepped up with "By the by, Connelly, your friend Desmond is not here to-night."

I turned, and saw it was Jackson, a gay, dissipated Trinity student, generally liked on account of his liberality, with either purse or news, in both which he abounded, having a rich uncle and a peculiar knack of inquiring after every body's business but his own.

"It was handsome of old Fitsmaurice to invite him in spite of politics," he continued; "the apology said he was indisposed, but, between ourselves, Connelly, sick or in health, he is not a safe acquaintance for any young man who wishes to go no farther than the outside of a gaol."

"I don't understand you," said I, piqued at his words, but curious to learn their full meaning.

"Possibly not," said Jackson, lowering his tone: "but there is a whisper that some of those poor devils of United Irishmen and French agents are now intriguing in town, and Desmond's domicile is mentioned as the scene of their meetings."

Jackson was seldom misinformed, and my own forbidden visits flashed across my mind as he spoke. Yet I tried to laugh down the idea, protesting it amused me to think of a man of Desmond's sense running such risks for a political chimera.

"All's well that ends well," drily remarked Jackson: "but it must have been a serious illness that kept him from Miss Fitsmaurice's residence. However, that is an illustration of love's labour lost, for, in my opinion, madam is too proud to put up with a mere boy-grinder though her own prospects were not once so good."

I was aware that the lady had discouraged his very marked attentions, and a word to Mr. Jackson was sufficient to bring forth all he knew.

"Her mother was a sister of old Fitsmaurice, who made a love-match with a sort of poor scholar intended for a Catholic priest. I think his name was Sullivan, and a sad bargain she had of him, for he turned out a drunkard, and the girl died early, disowned by all her family but one maiden aunt, who took their child when Sullivan left the country, and brought her up as Miss Geraldine Fitsmaurice. They say she left her nothing but a first-rate education and the affection of her uncle, who liked the girl from her infancy. What fortune follows some people! But here's my favourite waltz!" and off went Jackson.

I had danced, upon my persuasion, with two of the finest women in the room, who were delighted with my attentions, till the one was engaged by a lieutenant of engineers, and the other by a cornet of dragoons; yet, in spite of bright eyes, rapid waltzes, and champagne, Jackson's words came back upon my mind. Had Desmond really plunged so deeply in a desperate cause?—had sickness fallen upon him, or was some secret misfortune, which the world might not know, pressing on the man who had befriended me when I was a stranger?

These suspicions went and came, till pride and anger gave way to a restless desire to see my friend immediately, and learn how things were going with him. It was still long till the supper, the merriment was at its height, though I could not see Geraldine; but nobody would miss me, and Desmond's residence was near; so out I stepped, with a muttered quotation from Cicero, touching the duties of friendship, on my tongue, and an inward resolution to return as soon as possible.

The house in which Eugene had fixed his quarters had two entrances; one, the door of honour, was from a fashionable street, and the other from a long alley, which opened into a lane communicating with Merrion Square. The latter was my nearest way, and, besides, it afforded me the benefit of a quiet entrance in my ball costume, and, owing to local causes, mud was not to be apprehended.

The night was frosty, but dull and heavy, with a mist that reminded me of Shakespeare's "blanket of the dark." A single lamp burned at the entrance of the passage, but the light grew faint in the gloom of its length. Yet, as I advanced, there was a sound of voices before me, as if coming from Desmond's door. I never was inclined to eavesdropping, but my step grew involuntarily lighter, and there came a low whisper, but the voice was familiar to my ear, though its tone grew terribly deep in the darkness.

"You are betrayed, Desmond; Dr. Donovan, instead of being a French agent, is a government informer, and one of your meeting is in league with him. Read this note, which Copeland dropped not an hour ago; burn it when you have read it, dismiss the meeting, and leave to night for France—for France if you can, and all the good fortune that I have missed go with you. Desmond, do you know me?"

"Well, well," almost gasped Eugene; "but, Miss Fitsmaurice, why have you done this for me?"

"Mr. Eugene!—Mr. Eugene, dear!" said the voice of the old servant from within, "there's a gentleman axin for you."

"Good night," said the first speaker; but I heard a step coming up the alley, and instinctively turned up a narrow stone staircase, which wound into one of the old houses, just as a low figure apparently wrapped in a dark mantle, emerged into the faint light, and then perceiving the new comer, stepped suddenly back to avoid him, but it was too late. I saw the man rush forward—there was a scuffle in the dark, and then a voice, which my childhood had feared too often ever to forget, said,—"This way—this way! I will see your face. Ha! Miss Fitsmaurice! I have followed you to some purpose! Do you come to meet with rebels?"

I thought something flashed across the passage like the gleam of steel, then came a rustle of garments, a low deep moan, and a heavy fall; but the next instant the small figure shot past me, and I was alone in the darkness.

Readers, call it cowardice, inhumanity, or what you will, I gave no alarm—the act would have involved too much; but I turned up, by the light of that solitary lamp, from the ground where he had fallen forward, with the cross hilt of a long two edged dagger protruding from his left side, the still crafty, though death stamped face of Dr. Sullivan; and the next quarter of an hour found me entering the ball room, where the first object that met my sight was Geraldine Fitsmaurice, in all the splendour of dress and jewellery, waltzing with a tall and remarkably handsome stranger, whom Mr. Copeland had taken a relation's privilege to introduce to the company a little before, as his newly arrived friend, the younger son of Lord Glenallen, the residue of whose titles might be found in the Scotch Peerage.

I felt my eyes wandering to the lady's hand, but they were as white as ever below the diamond bracelets. Her wit was still as sparkling, nay, her smile was still as sweet, as she replied to the gallant speeches of her partner, who certainly was a good specimen of northern aristocracy. But her eye had a glance of keen and terrible expectation, as it turned to the opening door, that seemed to resemble "the fearful looking-for of judgment." On went the music, the dance and the flirtations, but just as Lord Glenallen's son was conducting Miss Fitsmaurice to supper, followed by the whole assembly, an alarm of "murder" rose from the street, and a body was borne past by the night patrol, followed by a confused crowd, which even at that late hour poured from all the lanes and alleys of the neighbourhood.

Of course many of the gentlemen sallied forth to collect intelligence, and soon returned with a report that Dr. Donovan, the converted priest, had been murdered, some said by the United Irishmen, and others by the agents of government, while a thousand vague rumours of secret plots and contemplated insurrections filled the city with panic and dismay, in the midst of which the company broke up, and the only composed countenance I saw among them was that of Geraldine Fitsmaurice.

She took leave of her uncle's guests, though their parting compliments were somewhat hurried, with the same ease and grace that bade them welcome, and the only observation which the night's events elicited from her was, that she "trusted the government would take more efficient means to insure public safety."

So I left old Fitsmaurice congratulating himself on the fact that his niece had too strong a mind for the fears of ordinary ladies.

The inquest of the following day was carried on in a spirit of most rigorous investigation, and great was the public astonishment when a man, who appeared to have been apprehended near the spot for the occasion, swore positively that he had heard Eugene Desmond express a great dislike towards the deceased, and refused to allow him to become a member of a secret society held at his lodgings, though the Doctor pretended to be an agent from France, and employed himself, who was a member, to take notes of their treasonable meetings. A party of military was dispatched on this information to seize Desmond and his papers, but after the most minute search and inquiry, to the manifest disappointment of the authorities, neither Desmond nor his papers could be found—his old servant, too, was gone; and the coroner's jury, all well chosen creatures, considering Eugene's flight as a corroboration of the informer's oath, and all the guilt which it imputed, delivered a verdict of "Wilful murder" against him. A warrant was immediately issued for his apprehension, and three days after he was arrested at Cork, when about to take his passage for America.

I lost no time in hastening to my friend's prison, to offer him my legal services, and consult over the facts of the case, of which I, at least, had gained such a terrible certainty. Desmond was still composed and calm, but the gentle countenance had grown more sadly grave. Yet some dark conviction of the fell truth had reached him, and when I hinted my knowledge of the transac-