
THE WORLD-MOTHER

SCOTLAND

By crag and lonely moor she stands,
This mother of half a world's great men,
And kens them far by sea-wracked lands,
Or Orient jungle or Western fen.

And far out 'mid the mad turmoil,
Or where the desert-places keep
Their lonely hush, her children toil,
Or wrapt in world-wide honour sleep.

By Egypt's sands or Western wave,
She kens her latest heroes rest,
With Scotland's honour o'er each grave,
And Britain's flag above each breast.

And some at home,—her mother love
Keeps crooning wind-songs o'er their graves,
Where Arthur's castle looms above,
Or Strathy storms or Solway ravés.

Or Lomond unto Nevis bends
In olden love of clouds and dew ;
When Trosach unto Stirling sends
Greetings that build the world anew.

Out where her miles of heather sweep,
Her dust of legend in his breast,
'Neath Agèd Dryburgh's aisle and keep,
Her wizard Walter takes his rest.

The World-Mother

And her loved ploughman, he of Ayr,
More loved than any singer loved
By heart of man amid those rare,
High souls the world hath tried and proved ;—

Whose songs are first to heart and tongue
Wherever Scotsmen greet together,
And, far out, alien scenes among,
Go mad at the glint of a sprig of heather.

And he, her latest wayward child,
Her Louis of the magic pen ;
Who sleeps by tropic crater piled,
Far, far, alas ! from misted glen ;

Who loved her, knew her, drew her so,
Beyond all common poet's whim :—
In dreams the whaups are calling low,
In sooth her heart is woe for him.

And they, her warriors, greater none
E'er drew the blade of daring forth ;
Her Colin ¹ under Indian sun,
Her Donald ² of the fighting North.

Or he, her greatest hero, he,
Who sleeps somewhere by Nilus' sands.
Grave Gordon, mightiest of those free,
Great Captains of her fighting bands ;—

Yea, these ; and myriad, myriad more,
Who stormed the fort or ploughed the main
To free the wave or win the shore,
She calls in vain ! she calls in vain !

¹ Colin Campbell (Lord Clyde), hero of Lucknow.

² Sir Donald Mackay (1st Lord Reay), whose Mackay Dutch Regiment was famous in the Thirty Years' War.

The World-Mother

Brave sons of her, far severed wide
By purpling peak or reeling foam ;
From Western ridge or Orient side,
She calls them home ! she calls them home !

And far, from East to Western sea,
The answering word comes back to her ;—
“ Our hands were slack, our hopes were free,
We answered to the blood astir ;—

“ The life by Kelpie loch was dull,
The homeward, slothful work was done,
We followed where the world was full,
To dree the weird our fates had spun ;

“ We built the brigg, we reared the town,
We spanned the earth with lightning gleam ;
We ploughed, we fought, 'mid smile and frown
Where all the world's four corners teem.

“ But under all the surge of life,
The mad race-fight for mastery,
Though foremost in the surgent strife,
Our hearts went back, went back to thee.”

For the Scotsman's speech is wise and slow,
And the Scotsman's thought it is hard to ken ;
But through all the yearnings of men that go,
His heart is the heart of the northern glen ;—

His song is the song of the windy moor.
And the humming pipes of the squirling din ;
And his love is the love of the shieling door,
And the smell of the smoking peat within.

And nohap how much of the alien blood
Is crossed with the strain that holds him fast ;
'Mid the world's great ill and the world's great good,
He yearns to the Mother of men at last.

The World-Mother

For there is something strong and something true
In the wind where the sprig of heather is blown ;
And something great in the blood so blue,
That makes him stand, like a man, alone.

Yea, give him the road and loose him free,
He sets his teeth to the fiercest blast ;
For there's never a toil in a far countrie,
But a Scotsman tackles it hard and fast.

He builds their commerce, he sings their songs,
He weaves their creeds with an iron twist ;
And making of laws or righting of wrongs,
He grinds it all as the Scotsman's grist. . . .

Yea, there, by crag and moor she stands,
This mother of half a world's great men ;
And out of the heart of her haunted lands
She calls her children home again.

And over the glens and the wild sea floors,
She peers so still, as she counts her cost ;
With the whaups low-calling over the moors,
Woe ! woe ! for the great ones she hath lost.