

THE SONG FISHERMEN'S SONG SHEET

"Come All Ye"

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MY SCOTIA BY THE SEA!

(A Song of a Gael for his Canadian Homeland.)

AUTHOR'S NOTE.--One of the psychological characteristics of the Kelt is his intense love of place, virtually a passion. I remark this only because it will explain my using Gaelic phrases (a refrain) in the following verses. Under this passion the Gael will conceive his country and birthplace in terms of personal endearment, such as mother and child, lover and beloved. In the text the Gaelic phrase, "A gradh geal mo chroidhe," which is pronounced somewhat like "Aw graw gal mo cree," means, "O bright love of my heart." I thus figure the native son of Nova Scotia conceiving his homeland as his most loved object, the unchanged mother. On the other hand, the phrase, "A cuishle mo chroidhe," which is pronounced "Aw cushla mo cree," means, "O vein of my heart." And surely this is appropriate, since the loyal and true native son in exile must be, literally, a vein right out of the heart of the motherland. And so, when I hear the streams and uplands and plains of my homeland calling me, the Gaelic phrase has a peculiar emotional and poetic value not to be got from any other phrase,--"Come home, acushla!--vein of my heart!"

O SCOTIA, my Scotia, laved by Atlantic tides,
Though alien lands still hold me, my heart with thee
abides:

They woo me like a lover, but I answer wistfully,--

"I want to be in Scotia,
(A gradh geal mo chroidhe),
In the homeland of my childhood,
My Scotia by the Sea!"

O Scotia, my Scotia, lapped in Acadian airs,
How magical the glamor thy golden summer years:
While treading sad gray cities, I cry out longingly,--

"I would I were in Scotia,
(A gradh geal mo chroidhe),
In the bright land of my boyhood,
Fair Scotia by the Sea!"

O Scotia, my Scotia, tho swept by frigid snows,
Thy rigors taught thy sturdy sons to fear no earthly foes:
Oft when the stress goes hardest, I laugh exultingly,--

"What son is there of Scotia
(A gradh geal mo chroidhe)
Forgets the brave land of his manhood,
Strong Scotia by the Sea?"

O Scotia, my Scotia, girt by the opal main,
I love thy lochs and rivers, each upland and each plain:
I hear them in my dreaming, still calling, calling me,--

"Come home, come home, a cuishle,
(A cuishle mo chroidhe!)
Come back to thine own homeland,
Thy Scotia by the Sea."

- John Daniel Logan -

GOD'S LULLABY

"Hushaby, hushaby!
 Who shall make a lullaby?
 Who shall sing a quiet song our weary eyes to close?
 Bitter are the years and long --
 O, to hear a mother-song!--
 O to feel again the charm a tired baby knows!

Hushaby, hushaby!
 Who shall make a lullaby?
 Night has known our restlessness and day has brought us pain.
 Grief and pain and fretfulness.--
 O, to find forgetfulness!
 O, to hide away and sleep, and never wake again."

Patiently, quietly
 Let your time of waiting be.
 The twilight throws about your feet its shadows cool and gray.
 Here's a hand upon your eyes,
 Light and sweet with lullabys.
 Here's the strangest song of all to charm your cares away!

Hushaby, hushaby!
 Here's a bed where you shall lie.
 Here's a quiet Mother who shall sing you from your pain.
 Hushaby, for safe and deep
 You shall hide away and sleep--
 Sleep untroubled through the dark, a little child again.

Hushaby, hushaby!
 Beautiful it is to die!
 The turning of the silent world shall be your cradle swing.
 O, full sweet and motherly
 Death shall lift her voice for thee!
 God hath taught her from His heart a lullaby to sing.

- Annie Campbell Huestis -

A BLAZED TRAIL

Tired of this trail shall I never be
 That leads to the land of old grey boulders,
 The smell of the woods incredibly
 Lightens the pack to my burdened shoulders,
 The leaf-green lane goes quietly on,
 But every ~~care~~ in the world is gone.

So softly the fronds of fern unfold
 The snap of a twig invades the hush,
 And the moose that freshly tracks this mould
 May hear the song of that hermit thrush.
 The trail is blazed from tree to tree,
 But a breath of wonder catches me.

And now the trail is beside a brook
 And brooklet music fills the air -
 Half-hidden beyond a shady nook
 A cascade dances down a stair -
 From rock to rock the path is plain,
 And here's the old log-cabin again!

- Noel H. Wilcox -

FOR SEUMAS O'BRIEN

O the grey shades of twilight are stealing through the trees,
 The thin trees, the homeless trees that sadden in the town,
 And the tired noise of traffic comes floating on the breeze
 Murmurs, re-echoes, and rumbles up and down;
 And past the weary hedgerows the teamster comes and goes
 And the dusty road is grey and never still;
 But far away at Mulleray the golden gorse-bush glows
 And the rabbit-folk are scudding up the hill.

O the wee stars are hidden, almost hidden by the glare
 Of big lamps, of bright lamps that glitter in the town,
 And och, the silver moonshine is lost amid the glare,
 And tall buildings black-browed, they hide the sky and frown;
 But far away at Mulleray, when dusk comes creeping round
 The pallid fox-glove folds her purple hood,
 And rustling eerie noises make a furtive, windy sound,
 And little queer things scuttle through the wood.

O take, take me back there to Eire and my home,
 The old hill, the dear hill, the hill I used to know
 Where the twelve winds of Heaven keep acalling as they roam,
 And wee things with big eyes come whisp'ring long and low;
 For far away at Mulleray when all is hushed and still
 The Hidden People leave the haunted glen
 And go riding, riding, riding till they're lost behind the hill...
 O Eire, how my heart runs home again!

- Molly Beresford -

NOT NOW

Summers ago there was peace in the earth's dust;
 Strength and a song in the cold sky's insistence;
 But what should I know of love made fast and thrust,
 Shivering and still, in the tall prison of distance?

I can see the colored feathers of a bird's breast,
 And watch the grey light sleep in the paling day;
 I can listen still to the surf that breaks without rest,
 And hear the young wind whisper and die away.

She is not more fair than these. But in one sick summer,
 Never at all have I cried for the petals' fall,
 Drifting the grass with white; nor the sea in slumber;
 Nor found quick joy in the sunlight. Never at all.

Does the first bud bloom, torn free of the broken bough?
 Summers ago they were loves of mine. Not now.

- Charles Bruce -

THE LUBBER

I wonder how it feels to sail a ship;
 A great, white ship,
 Or barque, or brig or some such craft -
 I've navigated nothing but a raft.

To feel the surge of water past the sheer;
 The clear, keen sheer,
 Then rising, hovering, failing, splash!
 I've never felt the sting of spindrift's flash.

To strain against the helm, to watch the sail;
 White arc of sail,
 All set, and swelling out to lee,
 I've never held a ship that's running free.

To see the waves all twisted by a squall;
 Mad, racing squall,
 See compass needle leave the pole
 And shiver, ere it swings back to its goal.

The gallant topmast bending like a whip;
 A golden whip,
 The waters rush; and then, to feel
 A pause before all things begin to reel.

A rolling lurch, a tumbling wall of green,
 Translucent green,
 To feel - sick. God! the scornful lip
 Of sailors, if I tried to sail a ship.

- Donald Cameron MacKay -

THE BIRCHES

Maidens fair,
 Flying hair,
 Naked limbs,
 Trailing draperies,
 Golden cymbals,
 Tinkling airs,
 Dance beneath
 Silver birches,
 Dance forever
 And forever.

Springtime green,
 Shimmer, shade,
 Summer night,
 Star-lit glade,
 Autumn robe,
 Rainbow hue,
 Winter snow,
 Crimson glow,
 Maidens dance
 Forever there.

Daintily,
 Tip-i-toe,
 Whirlingly
 Along they go,
 Maidens free
 Joyously,
 Dance among
 Silver birches,
 Dance forever
 And forever.

- Jerry Murphy -

VARIATIONS ON A THEME

She rolls the butter
Under her tongue,
Well aware
The trap's been sprung.

He scowls like hell
Behind his paper
And wishes to God
He had the last twenty-
four hours to live over
again.

- Bee -

Life gives
Us Love;
We gorge
From dark
Till dawn.
Nature, the great
Procuress,
Eggs us
On.
One day,
At breakfast,
We perceive
With pain,
Love gives
Us Life.
Well.
Hell;
Can we
Complain?

- Vee -

FREUD EN CUISINE

Bland and vapid,
Coldly virginal,
Its sleek white surface
Disdainful
Of licentious reds
And
Purples -
How it inflames me!
Smugly smirking,
Ignorant of life.

I long to sully its maiden blankness,
Ruthlessly to thrust
The realities upon it!
Blobs of
Passionate cheeries,
(1/3% bicarbonate of soda)
Smears of sullen bestial pecans -
Subtler, more insidious.
The sly, green caress
Of angelique.

My desire overcomes me!
I cannot withstand it!
Laughing,
I rush at it,
Strew it with strange
Fruits
And fervid colors....

Drooping and humble,
It shrinks
Quiescent before me;
Its virtue spotted ---
The angel-food cake.

THE YAHIE MINERS

Early in the month of May
 When all the ice is gone away,
 The Yahies, they come down to work
 With their white bags and dirty shirts,
 The dirty Yahie miners.

Chorus:

Bonnie boys, Oh! won't you gang,
 " " " " " "
 " " " " " "
 To beat the Yahie miners.

They take their picks and they go down
 Adigging coal on underground
 For board and lodging can't be found
 For dirty Yahie miners.

Chorus.

Into Mitchell's they do deal
 Nothing there but Injun meal
 Sour Molasses will make them squeal,
 The dirty Yahie miners.

Chorus.

Join the Union right away,
 Don't you wait till after pay,
 Join the Union right away,
 You dirty Yahie miners.

Chorus.

Mrs. MacNab she keeps the Hall,
 Where the Yahies they do call,
 You'll see them flock around the Hall
 The dirty Yahie miners.

Chorus.

Don't go near MacDonald's door,
 Else the bully will have you sure,
 For he goes 'round from door to door,
 Converting Yahie miners.

Chorus.

Jimmy Brinick he jumped in,
 Caught MacKeigan by the chin,
 Give me Maggie though she's thin,
 For I'm no Yahie miner.

Chorus.

From Rocky Boston they do come,
 The dammedeest Yahies ever found,
 Around the office they do crowd,
 The dirty Yahie miners.

Chorus.

The Lorway road it is now clear,
 There are no Yahies on the beer,
 The reason why they are not here,
 They're frightened of the miners.

Chorus.

John Logan is dead. But his soul goes marching on. He feared no earthly foes. When the stress went hardest he laughed exultantly. And in the end he triumphed. Even Dalhousie University acknowledges that Canadian Literature has a place in the Sun. Marquette University loses a Nova Scotian as head of its Department of English. But Harvard University appoints another Nova Scotian, Tucker Murray, to the Chairmanship of its Department of English. And so the torch is handed on. Despite, too, the efforts of sundry of our importations to douse it. x x x x Following from Lloyd Roberts: "Please accept belated but grateful thanks for the Fishermen's Song Sheets. I was hooked by the first batch, but expected to break loose again, when the bait began to lose its potency. But you are casting a bigger and better bait every issue and I am clean landed. Your hauls include some darn fine poetry in addition to the amusing stuff. Best of all, to me, a Maritimer, it all smacks of dulse, Fundy mud and the fog you love to touch, not to mention those down East folk, the salt of the earth and the true 'makers of Canada'. How they laughed at me in the west for my loyalty to the sea provinces! ... Well, your song sheets are thrilling me to fresh poetic inspiration, and I'll end by contributing to your basket. I'm a long way from the sea and my catch may smell bad when it arrives. If it does throw it out. x x x "What about putting this stuff out in a more permanent form, a sort of chap-book or something? Your fishermen should be happy to pay the costs. Then you might organize us into a loose society, the Song Fishermen's Club, or the Forty Singing Seamen, or how? But there, you'll think I'm trying to wish more work on you. If you can keep up these sheets you'll deserve a statue on Parliament Hill or a senatorship, and I'll use my great influence to see you get it. x.x x "Your visit to Low Eaves is still bright in our memory. We have hopes of getting to Halifax this summer, for the Authors bang-up. May it be a memorable occasion and honor to auld Scotia!" Molly Beresford writes: "Dear Skipper: Believe it or not, I've been so busy of late that it is only to-night that I've had time to read the last Song Sheet and this is Candlemas Eve - almost the season for one of W. M.'s 'mint juleps.' Many thanks for your congratulations on my 'translation to Truro' - whatever that may be! I hadn't thought I was so obscure as all that!! Robert Norwood remarks that I am 'always on top,' but between you and me, Skipper, that's not very complimentary. Were we dairymen he might convince me that he was thinking of cream of haply of the froth on Bliss's Beer, but being fishermen, - well, it's the flotsam that comes to the top, and drifts with the tide; but there's this to be said about it, that sometimes a ship-wrecked mariner has built a fire of the driftwood and warmed himself at it. x x x "To be less serious, however, let me tell you that the Song Sheet has made me acquainted with Stuart McCawley, who generously sent me a gallon of soda water with which to dilute what I saw of old Lukie's cargo. x x x "And that brings a thought to my mind. Don't you think the Song Sheet Fishermen might have a 'get-together' sometime? Personally I'd like to meet some of these mysterious people in the boat you skipper - 'W.B.' and 'W.M.' and 'H.A.W.' and 'Your friend.' Real herring fishermen always tell you they haven't much luck with strangers aboard. But luck or no luck, I think we ought to know just who we are that form the crew; I suggest, then, that hereafter you put everybody's name instead of symbols, or let us all use symbols....I, for instance, might be C.R.A.B. x x x I suppose you must have swelled up with pride to find that your good ship 'Song Sheet' had been distantly hailed by that distinguished Admiral of the high poetical seas, J.H.M. But remember, Andy, you look much nicer not too stout and so don't swell any more, whatever he says. Just let us get well underway and maybe we'll 'show him a clean pair of heels'!! x x x "I should like to pay a little tribute to that staunch and gallant fisherman-comrade John D. Logan, who had reached the Home port first, and heard the Master Fisherman's 'Well done!' I feel I have lost a real friend. We had many little talks and he let me borrow his books. Not long after I met him he bade my pay no heed to his gruffness, and indeed it didn't take long to find the warm heart beneath. Sometimes we'd disagree about a poem or a poet, but we agreed about the value of honest thought, and I can still hear him say: 'That's right, M.A.B., hold on to your spiritual independence, that's the most important thing in life. And I would here and now like to thank Doctor Logan for helping me to preserve my spiritual independence in a strange land - not strange now, but new and strange when I first met him. x x x "I'm sending you

(Continued on next sheet)

a song specially for Seumas O'Brien and hope it will help to bring him a speedy recovery. I don't know if he knows Mulleray - he ought to for it's nearly next door to where the Boys of Wexford come from. x x x "Please send the next Song Sheet to me at the Normal College, Truro. With kindest thoughts to you and all the fishermen." x x x A rollicking sea ballad by Grace and Joe Wallace was received too late for this issue; it will appear in our next. x x x We are indebted to Stuart McCawley for The Yahie Miners. He writes it was written about 1884 and is still being sung in Cape Breton. "Yahie," he explains, means "uncouth farmer". He might have added that the ballad deals with a condition that is largely responsible for the difficulties that are encountered in the prosecution of the coal industry in Nova Scotia. Coal mining in Cape Breton is really a seasonal occupation. Before the entry of the Dominion Coal Company the mines were operated for the most part during the summer months when the St. Lawrence was free from ice and there was ready access to an adequate market. A large porportion of the mine workers were farmers who returned to their homes in the country when navigation closed in the Fall. Since that time efforts to operate the mines continuously have failed because of the limited market offering during the winter months and as a result distress in many of the communities has become a hardy perennial. x x x We have on hand songs by Ethel Butler, Bliss Carman, Grace and Joe Wallace, Annie Campbell Huestis and Alexander Louis Fraser but more are required. x x x Please address P. O. Box 1120, Halifax. And finally, dear brethren, we clipped the following from the Newfoundland Fisherman's Advocate, of January 11. "An error occurred in some of the first copies of our last week's issue, in the obituaries of Rev. G. S. Chamberlain and Mr. Wm. Samson. The words, "He will be buried at the Anglican cenetery this afternoon by Rev. Canon Bayly, and rest by the side of his lamented wife," referred to the late Mr. Chamberlain. Inadvertently, they were placed by the printer in the obituary of Mr. Samson. The error was discovered subsequently and corrected, but several copies had already been off the press. xxx Mr. Samson's wife survives him. Mrs. Chamberlain died five years ago. Canon Bayly, assisted by Rev. Mr. Rowe, officiated at the burial of both Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Samson, on Friday afternoon last. x x x This issue of the Song Sheet is being mailed to the following named: Baker, Clifford L; Bannon, R. B; Benson, Nathaniel A; Beresford, Molly; Bernasconi, H. P; Bruce, Charles; Butler, Ethel; Carew, W. J; Carman, Bliss; Carten, Laura, Clarke, George Frederick; Fletcher, Molly; Fraser, A. L; Gillis, James D; Harley, H. A; Hatheway, R.H; Hazen, King; Hemmeon, Allen; Hopkins, R. F; Huestis, Annie Campbell; King, Agnes; Leslie, Kenneth; Leslie, Robert; Livesay, Dorothy; Llwyd, J. P. D; McCarthy, Molly; McCawley, Stuart; MacGlashen, J. A; McKay, Donald; Merkel, Florence; Mitchell, J.O; Murphy, Leo; Norwood, Robert; Nutt, Elizabeth S; O'Brien, Seumas; Pierce, Lorne; Pound, A. M; Reid, Robie, C; Roberts, Charles G.D; Gostwick; Roberts, Lloyd; Ross, William; Stewart, Florence; Tufts, Evelyn; Tyler, Hilda; Uniacke, Jim; Vickery, E. J; Wallace, Joe; Wilcox, Noel; Williams, Ifan.
