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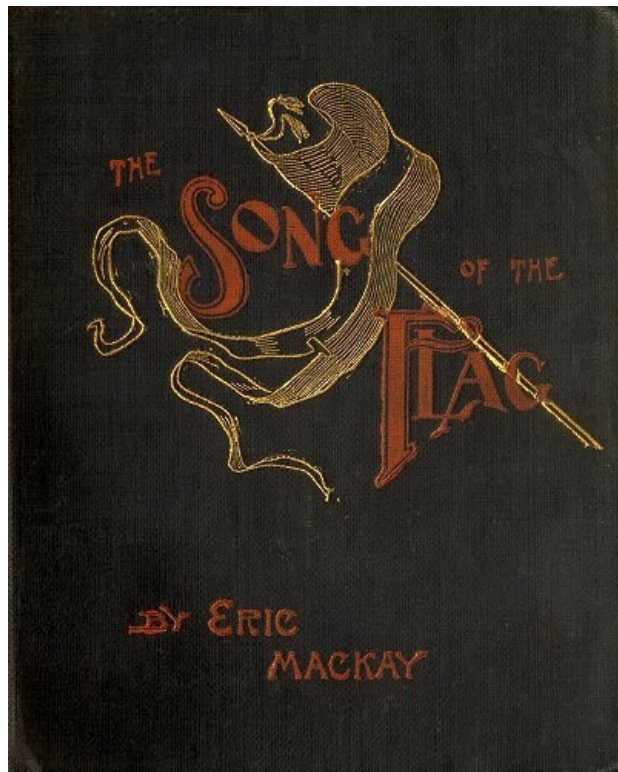
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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SONG OF THE FLAG: A NATIONAL ODE ***



THE
SONG OF THE FLAG

A National Ode

BY
ERIC MACKAY

Author of "Love Letters of a Violinist," "Vox Amoris," &c.

THE SONG OF THE FLAG.

[5]

I.

Up with the country's flag!
And let the winds caress it, fold on fold,—
A stainless flag, and glorious to behold!
It is our honour's pledge;
It is the token of a truth sublime,
A thing to die for, and to wonder at,
When, on the shuddering edge
Of some great storm, it waves its woven
 joy,
Which no man shall destroy,
In shine or shower, in peace or battle-time.
Up with the flag!
The winds are wild to toss it, and to brag
Of England's high renown,—
And of the throne where Chivalry has sat
Acclaimed in bower and town
For England's high renown!—
And of these happy isles where men are
 free
And masters of the sea,
The million-mouthed sea,
That calls to us from shore to furthest
 shore—
That fought for us of yore,—
The thunder-throated, foam-frequented
 sea
That sounds the psalm of Victory
 evermore!

[6]

[7]

[8]

II.

For England's sake to-day,—
And for this flag of ours which, to the
 blast,
Unfurls, in proud array,
Its glittering width of splendour
 unsurpassed,—
For England's sake,
For our dear Sovereign's sake,—
We cry all shame on traitors, high and low,
Whose word let no man take,
Whose love let no man seek throughout
 the land,—
Traitors who strive, with most degenerate
 hand,
To bring about our country's overthrow!

[9]

III.

The sun reels up the sky, the mists are
 gone,
And overhead the lilting bird of dawn
Has spread, adoring-wise, as for a prayer,
Those wondrous wings of his,

[10]

Which never yet were symbols of despair!
 It is the feathery foeman of the night
 Who shakes adown the air
 Song-scented trills and sunlit ecstasies.
 Aye! 'tis the lark, the chorister in gray,
 Who sings hosannas to the lord of light,
 And will not stint the measure of his lay
 As hour to hour, and joy to joy, succeeds; [11]
 For he's the morning-mirth of English
 meads,
 And we who mark the moving of his wings,
 We know how sweet the soil whereof he
 sings,—
 How glad the grass, how green the
 summer's thrall,
 How like a gracious garden the dear Land
 That loves the ocean and the tossed-up
 sand
 Whereof the wind has made a coronal;
 And how, in spring and summer, at sun- [12]
 rise,
 The birds fling out their raptures to the
 skies,
 And have the grace of God upon them all.

IV.

Up with the flag!
 Up, up, betimes, and proudly speak of it;
 A lordly thing to see on tower and crag,
 O'er which,—as eagles flit, [13]
 With eyes a-fire, and wings of phantasy,—
 Our memories hang superb!
 The foes we frown upon shall feel the curb
 Of our full sway; and they shall shaméd be
 Who wrong, with sword or pen,
 The Code that keeps us free.
 For there's no sight, in summer or in
 spring,
 Like our great standard-pole,
 When round about it ring [14]
 The cheers of Britons, bounden, heart and
 soul,
 To deeds of duty, dear to Englishmen;
 And he who serves it has a name to see
 On Victory's muster-roll;
 And he who loves it not, how vile is he!
 For 'tis the Land's delight,—
 Our ocean-wonder, blue and red and
 white;
 Blue as the skies, and red as roses are, [15]
 And white as foam that flashed at
 Trafalgàr;
 The Land's delight!
 The badge and test of right,
 Girt with its glory like a guiding-star!

V.

The wind has roared in English many a
 time,
 And foes have heard it on the frothy main,
 In doom and danger and in battle-pain; [16]
 And yet again may hear,
 In many a sea-ward, sun-enamoured clime;
 For all the hearts of traitors ache with fear
 When our great ships go forth, as
 heretofore,
 Full-arméd from the shore,—
 And Boreas bounds exultant on the seas,

To bid the waves of these,—
The subject-waves of England and the [17]
Isles,—
Out-leap for miles and miles,
As loud as lions loosed on enemies!

VI.

Oh, may no mean surrender of the rights
Of our ancestral swords,
Which made our fathers pioneers and
lords,
And victors in the fights,—
May no succession of the days and nights [18]
Find us or ours at fault,
Or careless of our fame, our island-fame,
Our sea-begotten fame,—
And no true Briton halt
In his allegiance to the Victory-name
Which is the name we bow to in our
thought,
Where English deeds are wrought, [19]
In lands that love the languors of the sun,
And where the stars have sway,
And where the moon is marvelled at for
hours!
The flags of nations are the ocean-flowers,
And ours the dearest, ours the brightest
one,
That ever shimmered on the watery way
Which patriots call to mind
When they remember isles beyond the
dawn
Where our sea-children dwell. [20]
For there's no flag afloat upon the wind
Can wave so high, or show so fair a front,
Or gleam so proudly in the battle-brunt,
Or tell a tale of conquest half so well
As this we doat upon!

VII.

The storm is our ally, the raging sea
Is our adherent, and, to make us free, [21]
A thousand times the full-tongued
hurricane
Has bellowed forth its menace o'er the
deep;
And when dissensions sleep,
When sleep the wrought-up rancours of
the age
We shall again inscribe, and yet again,
On History's glowing page
The story of the flag,—
For 'twas our Nelson's flag [22]
Which none in all the world shall put to
shame,
Or vilify, or blame,—
The story of the glory of the flag
Which waved at Waterloo,
And was, from first to last, the symbol true
Of Wellington's pure fame!

[23]

VIII.

High, high the flag, for England's sake and
ours,
Who know its vested powers,

And what it means, in war time, and in
peace
When fierce dissensions cease,—
High, high the flag of England over all
Which nought but good befall!
High let it wave, in triumph, as a sign
Of Freedom's right divine,—
Its glorious folds out-fluttering in the gale,
Again to tell the tale
Of deeds heroic, wrought at Duty's call!
The wind's our trumpeter; and east and
west,
And north and south, all day, as on a quest
Of mirth and marvel,—all the live-long day
It bears the news about
Of all we do and dare, in our degree,
And all the land's great shout,
And all the pomp and pageant of the Sea!

[24]

[25]



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LOVE LETTERS OF A VIOLINIST

By ERIC MACKAY

LONDON: LAMLEY & Co., EXHIBITION ROAD, S.W.

"'LOVE LETTERS OF A VIOLINIST.'—Letters to make the ordinary writer envious, and to awaken in lovers thanks to the poetical pen that has given forth utterances so suited to their good health or malady. Here a verse to cheer the almost hopeless; a stanza to teach the refraining a lesson in charge and capture; lines to fall in love with the memory, to charm the darkness, and be another light to rule the day. London was yawning behind her giant hand. The moment was propitious, and any strain of beauty was sure of an audience. At this felicitous moment a pipe of splendour sounded. London ceased to yawn. A violinist was communicating the passions of his heart to those who would listen, and amid great interest he went from house to house a-singing.... Eric Mackay is one of those wise men who have no immature volumes to haunt them. He first asked right of way on the road to Parnassus with a bundle of melodies which have never lost their appeal. While youth seeks the pink cheek, these Love Letters will command the homage of lovers. Your Petrarchs are not as common as sparrows.... These outpourings from a burning heart will always compel the student of our literature to weigh them, sift them, and establish them in some very honourable position. The charm of this early book is its freedom from drag. It moves on always. The reader is hastened along; he has wonderful and unexpected views, which ravish him as the abrupt magnificences of the Pyrenees ravished Gautier. Perhaps you expect a tree, but you see a stream. Now, at last, it must be a great green hill, and behold! you peep down into an

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'The giant-singer who did storm
the gates
Of Heaven and Hell'—

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Transcriber's Note: Minor typographical errors have been corrected without note, whilst significant amendments have been listed below.

P. 10, 'ecstacies' amended to *ecstasies*.

P. 19, 'langours' amended to *languors*.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE SONG OF THE FLAG: A NATIONAL ODE

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