

T I R E E .

G. A. Holleyman.

There lies an isle far to the west,  
To which sailed men of old,  
Who sought a land therein to rest,  
And so they came 'tis told;  
They heuled their long ships to the shore,  
These Norhemmen from the sea,  
They fought and won because they saw,  
The fairness of Tíree.

This land 'midst ocean's vast embrace,  
Retains its fairness yet;  
And where 'neath heaven's windswept face,  
Is gem so richly set.  
An emerald on a sapphire rare,  
Ringed with a beach of pearl,  
With rocky peaks that darkly stare,  
To where green waters swirl.

Though fairer far by nature's art,  
Our isle dwells not alone,  
But watched by guardian isles apart,  
Lies dreaming of her own;  
Grim Mull and Merve eastwards rear,  
Their rugged peaks on high,  
While westwards Barra and Uist rise clear,  
And northwards Rhum and Skye.

Unclothed by tree or mossy dell,  
Uncrowned by mountains bold,  
Devoid of industries that spell,  
Of mundane greed and gold,  
Free from the City's dirt and lust;  
A pastoral dream of yore;  
A symbol of Iona's trust,  
Of Christian love and lore.

Across the slisbh sea breezes blow,  
And here the muren sways,  
Along the machair's ebb and flow,  
To where curve shelly bays.  
While here upon the loch's cool steen,  
Reflects the sunset's ray,  
On down's wild sky whose blush unseen,  
Heralds the opening day.

This isle boasts not of mansions grand,  
Of palaces, or kings,  
Of fashionable cults that stand,  
For all that wealth e'ev brings.  
Only a heritage acquired,  
By toil on land and sea,  
Which makes them stand, a race inspired,  
Wherever men live free.

Full many a year has passed, yet oft,  
When nights dark curtain falls,  
A song comes from a lonely croft,  
And to my spirit calls;  
It tells of things in days gone by,  
It speaks of hills and sea,  
It whispers "I see" and "I know" and "I see",  
To be back in time.

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1941.