



# THE MOTHERS OF MEN

**T**HE bravest battle that was ever fought!  
Shall I tell you where and when?  
On the maps of the world you will find it not—  
'Tis fought by the mothers of men.

Nay, not with cannon or battle shot,  
With sword or nobler pen!  
Nay, not with eloquent words or thoughts  
From the mouths of wonderful men.

But deep in a walled-up woman's heart—  
Of woman that would not yield,  
But bravely, silently, bore her part—  
Lo, there is that battlefield!

No marshalling troop, no bivouac song,  
No banner to gleam and wave;  
But oh! these battles of woman, they last  
From babyhood to the grave.

Yet faithful still as a bridge of stars,  
She fights in her walled-up town,  
Fights on and on in endless wars,  
Then, silent, unseen, goes down.

O, ye with banners and battle shot,  
And soldiers to shout and praise!  
I tell ye the kingliest victories fought  
Were found in these silent ways.

O, spotless woman in a world of shame!  
With splendid and silent scorn,  
Go back to God as white as you came—  
The kingliest warrior born!

—Joaquin Miller

