

The Rulers

By GERALD J. LIVELY

*"Hear now a song, a song of broken interludes,
"A song of little cunning, of a singer nothing worth
"Through the naked words and mean
"May ye see the truth between.
"As the singer knew and touched it * * * *"—RUDYARD KIPLING*

Canada Speaks:



HE fairest was I, when ye took me, of all the young fair lands,
Plastic as clay to the moulding, deserving a Master's hands.
My fair sea coasts had ne'er been soiled with the tramp of felon throng;
And my rights were built upon equal rights, not on weaker peoples' wrong.
And I was fair, ay, wondrous fair, fair as our summer nights,
And my eyes were bright as my northern stars garnished with Northern Lights.
My head was crowned in a mist of gold; I was perfect of form and face,
And had my servants but been true my breasts would have nourished a race.
And I was rich, ay, wondrous rich, in forest and mine and farm
Awaiting the touch of the toiler to work his wonderful charm.
But all the wealth of my forests, the wealth of the mine and the farm,
Instead of bringing me happiness has brought me shame and harm;
And I see a sullen people where there should be a race of braves,
And I see the monopolist marching, triumphant, o'er necks of slaves,
My brave old Mother's still leading in Liberty's age-long race,
And I see a look of high resolve stamped on the proud old face,
And my Sister Nations pass me—their cars bear Freedom's name—
But I turn my back upon the course, my head bowed down with shame.
And the meaner peoples mock me and whisper my name with jeers,
And my proud young heart is breaking, and my eyes are abrim with tears.
Oh, why should my sisters regard me with horror in their eyes
While I stand here in my sin and my shame sorrowfully, woefully wise.
Listen to me, my Rulers, ye who have wrought my shame,
Wardens were ye of my honor, wardens were ye of my fame.
Listen, ye who have ruled me, who'd make my country a hell.
Listen, ye Thieves and Panders, listen, and I will tell.
Ye tore off my garments of honor, ye tore off my maiden's veil,
And ye thrust my body upon the street—as a harlot's is thrust—for sale.
Ye prostituted my Womanhood, and a Profit ye made of the wrong,
And ye held me naked before the crowd and the lewd and the leering throng.
Ye've torn the heart from my forests, ye've ripped the guts from my mines,
Retired, and divided the plunder—strictly on Party lines.
Ye've filch'd my lands from my People to be traded away for a song,
Or, divisioned them out amongst yourselves, making a wrong more wrong.
Ye've culled, ye've appraised, ye've apportioned, and my wealth, that in trust I gave,
Is showered on a crowd of Grafters, and on Bribery's loathely slave.
Ye've even quarrelled amongst yourselves—"Knave" to each other ye say—
Knaves ye are and the sons of knaves, knaves in each others' pay.
And ye prate of the love that ye bear me; the land with your mouthings ye fill;
Your love is wrapped-up in a foreign draft, and your souls in a dollar bill.
Ye've reared across my highways the Toll-bars of Graft and Greed;
Ye've fattened a favored faction on the bread of my People's need;
Ye have given the keys of my Granaries into the hands of the Few
Who have all the sin of the Gentile and all the vice of the Jew.
Ye have raised up the hated "Octroi;" ye've established the Milling Soke;
And my People are bowing beneath the rod, stumbling under the yoke.
What have ye done with my Coal-fields, and my streams' unbridled power?
Answer, ye Bawds and Lechers, what have you done with my Dower?
Have ye used it well, as a blessing, earning my Peoples' love?
Or fashioned it into the burden that calls down a curse from above?
Ye have given the Usurer mastery over my Peoples' lives,