

## **To my Fellow-Women**

Oh last at the cross, and first at the grave,  
And first at the Rising, too;  
Is there nothing left for your hearts to feel,  
Or left for your hands to do?  
Have you lost your crown of the days of old,  
As the mates of noble men?  
Are you faint and fearful and witless now?  
Who were bold as the she-lions then.

Are you playthings now, who were heroes' guides?  
Are you dolls, who were queens on earth?  
Have you stepped with a simper from your thrones,  
And strangled your souls at birth?  
Priestess and prophetess shrined of yore—  
Have you naught of their breath divine?  
Vala of North and Sybil of South,  
Have they perished in all their line?

Have you heard of the warrior queens who shed  
On your country's dawn a glow?  
Of Scotia, and Eire and Maedb who flash  
From the shadows of long ago?—  
When the mothers of Erin fed their babes  
From the sword-point, bright and bare,  
And the Druidess flew in the battle's van  
By the burning torch's glare.

Far down the echoing aisles of the past  
Comes the tread of stately feet,  
Where Jewess, and Pagan, and Christian,  
Shrined in an equal glory meet;  
There Judith walks with the virgin Joan,  
And Miriam chants of Egypt's seas,  
And she that bore the Gracchi is there,  
And she that suckled the Maccabees.

Is there never a name on all our roll  
Of noble women and fair  
That is worthy the lustre of such as these  
To grandly win and wear?  
Shall a woman's hand be the first to raise  
The banner that leads the free  
In every land that has rent its bonds,  
Save alone, O Erin, in thee?

Oh women of Ireland, make you a name  
That the world shall hear and thrill!

Oh women of Ireland, this is no time  
For babbling or sitting still;  
No time is it now to doubt and quail—  
There is holiest work to do—  
The harvest of Fate is ripe this day,  
And God and your country have need of you.

FANNY PARNELL.