



# Mary Queen Of Scotland And The Isles

*Stefan Zweig*

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Queen of Scotland and the Isles By Stefan Zweig. Originally published in 1935. Foreword: The clear, the manifest, is self-explanatory but mystery is a spur to creative imagination. Always, therefore, figures and events that are shrouded in mystery demand elucidation and stimulate the ingenuity of the artistic mind. Among historical problems that call unceasingly for solution, the tragedy of Mary Stuart ranks as a crucial instance. Surely of all the women who have made their mark in the world, no other has been the theme of so many dramas, novels, biographies, and discussions. Throughout four centuries she has allured poets and tormented the fancy of men of learning. Still, today, her story has again and again to be retold. Because that which is confused craves for clarity, that which is in darkness strains towards the light. The answers to the riddle of Mary's life and character are almost as contradictory as they are manifold. Some regard her as a murderess, others as a martyr some as an intriguer, others as a saint. The diversity of opinions about this woman is due, not to a shortage of material but to the perplexing superabundance of contemporary records. In the thousands upon thousands of documents, reports, records of trials, letters, etc., relating to her, the question of her guilt or innocence is continually being re-examined, and the re-trial has continued for three centuries. The more meticulously we scrutinize the documents, the more painfully do we become aware how dubious is the authenticity of historical evidence, and how untrustworthy therefore the conclusions of historians. For no matter how uncontestedly genuine an ancient document may be, this genuineness does not provide any guarantee as to the human validity of its contents. In the case of Mary Queen of Scots more plainly perhaps than in any other do we become aware how diversely two or more observers may describe an incident which they have witnessed simultaneously. Every well-attested fact is countered by an equally well-attested falsehood and truth, fact and falsehood so mingled, that every possible view as to her or this or that matter is concerned and as to her in Darnley's murder, seems equally well-attested. When, over and above this conflict of evidence, we take into account the partisanship of politicians and patriots, our estimate of the value of the picture that emerges is yet more uncertain. In any case it is but natural for the actors, ideas, and outlooks are contrasted so few, if any, can avoid the temptation of one and the other wrong, one guilty and the other innocent. If, as in the instance, the witnesses belong to one or of the parties, religions, or philosophies, we are bound to be a little biased of course. Speaking generally, we find the blame to Mary, and Catholic ones the English historians tend to describe the former as a villainess, whilst Scottish authorities incline to her and to regard her as a victim of calumny. The contents of the Casket Letters the thorniest problem that the members of the other faction are no less that these epistles must have been written. The book extends into the most trivial details of the life. It is perhaps easier for one who is not a to an unbiased judgment upon for one blood begins to course more swiftly when they tip for it easier for him to contemplate with which is at one and the same time and true it would be over-bold even for a foreigner to be was capable of learning the truth, the whole truth, and but lie truth about Mary Stuart's life...

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