

TO THOSE WHO RETURN

You who have fought and lived, and fought again,
And mocked the fears that frighten lesser men,
We bid you welcome home! We offer thanks
That such as you were called to quell the ranks
Of Evil; that your will and arms endured
Till now our threatened freedom is secured.

You who have shared in Freedom's War, and known
The woes unspeakable that rocked her throne—
You who have helped to crown her brows anew
With olive and with laurel—unto you
We raise our hearts in gratitude and praise;
Forgive our halting speech, our tinkling lays.

We greet you, and we offer thanks for all—
The will obedient to an inward call,
The faith that fought through darkness of despair,
The flawless courage, strong to do or bear,
The golden heart that laughed discomfort down,
That made no bid for pity or renown.

You fought for Liberty! (How many died!)
See that you guard her purifying flame!
The dross of senseless, narrow, racial pride,
The small conceits that spot a nation's fame—
Purge clean these blots! Blend to one perfect whole
Their aims and ours who fought for Freedom's soul.

—Marie E. Eglington