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OUR COMMON CITIZENSHIP

Who counts on the roll of our nation to rouse our citizen pride,
Like the patriot, sure of his soul-girths, enlisting the right for his guide—
While holding the reins of his statecraft whose cunning's the nation's renown.

The well-being of all, relieved from the thrall
Of ambitions professional grown?
The nation is first, as race seeketh blend
With race, in pursuit of a one common end:
Next to God is it first, and the plea is accurst
That whetteth a bias, the claim to obtend.

And what in the State is there greater than virtue, the heirloom of all?
Or the culture that seeks to beget it, within or beyond prison-wall?
'Twas the Master who said to the culprit: There's room for you, yea, with
the best;

And Gentle or Jew may rightly renew
Such claim as a birthright-bequest,
From brother to brother. The nation is ours;
Together we labor enhancing its powers:
With duties apace, with race aiding race,
'Tis a commonwealth's shrine we would garland with flowers.

Alas, for our blood-written annals! What ideal is nobler than this?
The communal crowning the human, all heedless of use-and-wont's hiss.
Defiant of sectary-strivings to compass the freedom of man,

E'er tainting the right with malignity's blight,
To be gleaned by the poor partizan,
Who first framed the laws of a nationhood's boast?
Who first preached recall for a brotherhood lost?
Shall we preach, shall we pray, then foully betray
The counsels of God as we turn from our post?

Divine cometh ever the message to frown on the crime of the Cross;
But ne'er be it said of our justice, that its substance is ethical dross,
In which we would plant high reprisal to crucify rightness anew.

For the sake of the narrow whose zeal is to harrow
The insight beyond its purview,
The fiat's gone forth a nation we'd be,
The land, as we sing, of a people born free,
With duty apace, with race aiding race,
'Tis a one from the many our country would be.

—J. M. HARPER, Author of "Champlain."

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