

“War-worn, sun-scorched, stained with the
dust of toil,
And battle-scarred they come—victorious.
Exultantly we greet them; cleave the sky
With cheers, and fling our banners to the
winds;
We raise triumphant songs, and strew
their path
To do them homage—bid them ‘Welcome
Home.’”

We hear drum beats, bugle calls, and the tread of armed men on the march in those first two lines—“war-worn, sun-scorched” and so on. A new emotional experience comes to us with the quicker moving syllables in the next two lines; the rhythm is fitted to exultation. Also we are treated to a new but brilliant metaphor—“cleave the sky with cheers.” We are in the realm of poetry. Here I might close. But fine as the preceding samples of Mrs. Annie Rothwell-Christie’s martial verse have been, the pathos of the following, from “The Woman’s Part,” is overwhelmingly human and moving and ennobling. The inspiration is derived from reflecting whether to those who, fired by love of adventure or country, have gone to the war, the mothers, sisters, and sweethearts shall give regrets, words, prayers, or tears. The poet disparages all these, and turns to solace the mother or wife whose son or husband has died on the battlefield:

“O, woman-heart be strong,
Too full for words—too humble for a
prayer—
Too faithful to be fearful—offer here
Your sacrifice of patience. Not for long
The darkness. When the dawn of peace
breaks bright
Blessed she who welcomes whom her God
shall save,
But honored in her God’s and country’s
sight
She who lifts empty arms to cry, ‘I
Gave.’”

After reading that noble poem of love and pathos, and being moved to emotions too deep for tears, one knows that all distinctions of sex are man-made and ephemeral and abortive—that only “soul,” whatever be its form of earthly tenement, is real. For Annie Rothwell-Christie who wrote that poem was altogether soul—superman, superwoman—gifted with the speech of angels. In my view her martial verse is absolutely unique amongst all literature, and a distinct contribution, *sui generis*, to world-literature. We raise monuments to heroes and heroines, to soldiers and statesmen. If ever we reach the stage in civilisation when we shall see that some poets are as worthy of such memorials as are heroes, at least one Canadian poetess will deserve the honour, namely, she who made immortal this long unrecognised truth
“As the blood of the martyr enfruitens
his creed, so the hero sows peace.”

