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The Returned Maine Battle Flags

Moses Owen

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The Returned Maine Battle Flags.

BY MOSES OWEN

Nothing but flags—but simple flags,
Tattered and torn and hanging in rags:
And we walk beneath them with careless tread,
Nor think of the hosts of the mighty dead,
That have marched beneath them in days gone by,
With a burning cheek and a kindling eye,
And have bathed their folds with their young life's tide,
And dying blessed them, and blessing, died.

Nothing but flags—yet methinks at night
They tell each other their tale of fright;
And dim spectres come, and their thin arms twine
Round each standard torn—as they stand in line.
As the word is given—they charge! they form!
And the dim hall rings with the battle's storm;
And once again, through smoke and strife,
Those colors lead to a Nation's life.

Nothing but flags—yet they're bathed with tears;
They tell of triumphs—of hopes—of fears;
Of a mother's prayers—of a boy away;
Of a serpent crushed—of the coming day;
Silent they speak—and the tear will start,
As we stand beneath them with throbbing heart,
And think of those who are ne'er forgot;
Their flags come home—why come they not?

Nothing but flags yet we hold our breath,
And gaze with awe at those types of death;
Nothing but flags—yet the thought will come,
The heart must pray though the lips be dumb;
They are sacred, pure, and we see no stain
On those dear loved flags come home again;
Baptzied in blood, our purest, best,
Tattered and torn, they're now at rest.