

“Gone Across”

A POEM

BY J. HOWARD FLOWER

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Delospano

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1922p

"GONE ACROSS"

HERE'S A HAND to Bergdoll
Across the saving sea!
America would pen you up—
In Germany you're free.

When you hid safe or fled unseen,
Preyed for by a ghoulish Shape,
Here's one that thrilled to each covert move
And prayed for your escape.

I knew the *feel*,— three years before,
In the first of this hellish time
I too lay hid from the insolent
Menace of law and crime.

(That spring when a horsebackt lister
Went scouring up and down,
Compelling potential killers
To be listed thru the town.)

O for a later Whittier
To tower forth to pen
The threat, the curse of God upon
This newer "hunting of men"!

Hunted by hellhounds— hunted for what?
To hale to a martial court
Men that never were soldiers,
Nor deigned to be aught of the sort!!

—But today o'er the wave there flashes word
You openly are free—
And I fling a laugh to Bergdoll
Across retrieving sea!

E'en thus I admired and envied them,
When that most lucky clan
Who dove from the Ogre's den, bobbed up
In friendly Yucatan.

Like the black who dropt his "duty" and fled
From the south to the polar star,
Who sped under cover of swamp and night
To kindly Canada.

When my neighbors developept an earthy spite
And would drag me into their brawl,
I discovered my transcendental mind
By scrambling over a wall.

So when the peoples are called to kill
For plutocrat and king,
I'm not pro-German, not pro-French—
I'm not pro-anything!

Why wait for a vague millennium when
War standards rule no more?
In this very *now* I despise and deny
The whole sham code of war.

Should the filthy devil ever die,
'T will be when men have nerve
And pride to doom the thing *en masse*,
Arise and refuse to serve.

And whether they flee a draft like a plague
And secretly steal hence,
Or face and fight it here at home
Makes meager difference.

To deal with a brutal force, tho law,
Two noble modes exist:
One (birdlike) to rise and proudly flit,
One (manly) to stay and resist.

If the bulk of their fellows turn to fiends,
E'en gods have the right to flee.
So here's a hand to Bergdoll
Across the laughing sea!

Hartland, Vermont

Saturday, January 29, 1921
February 27 to March 1, 1922

