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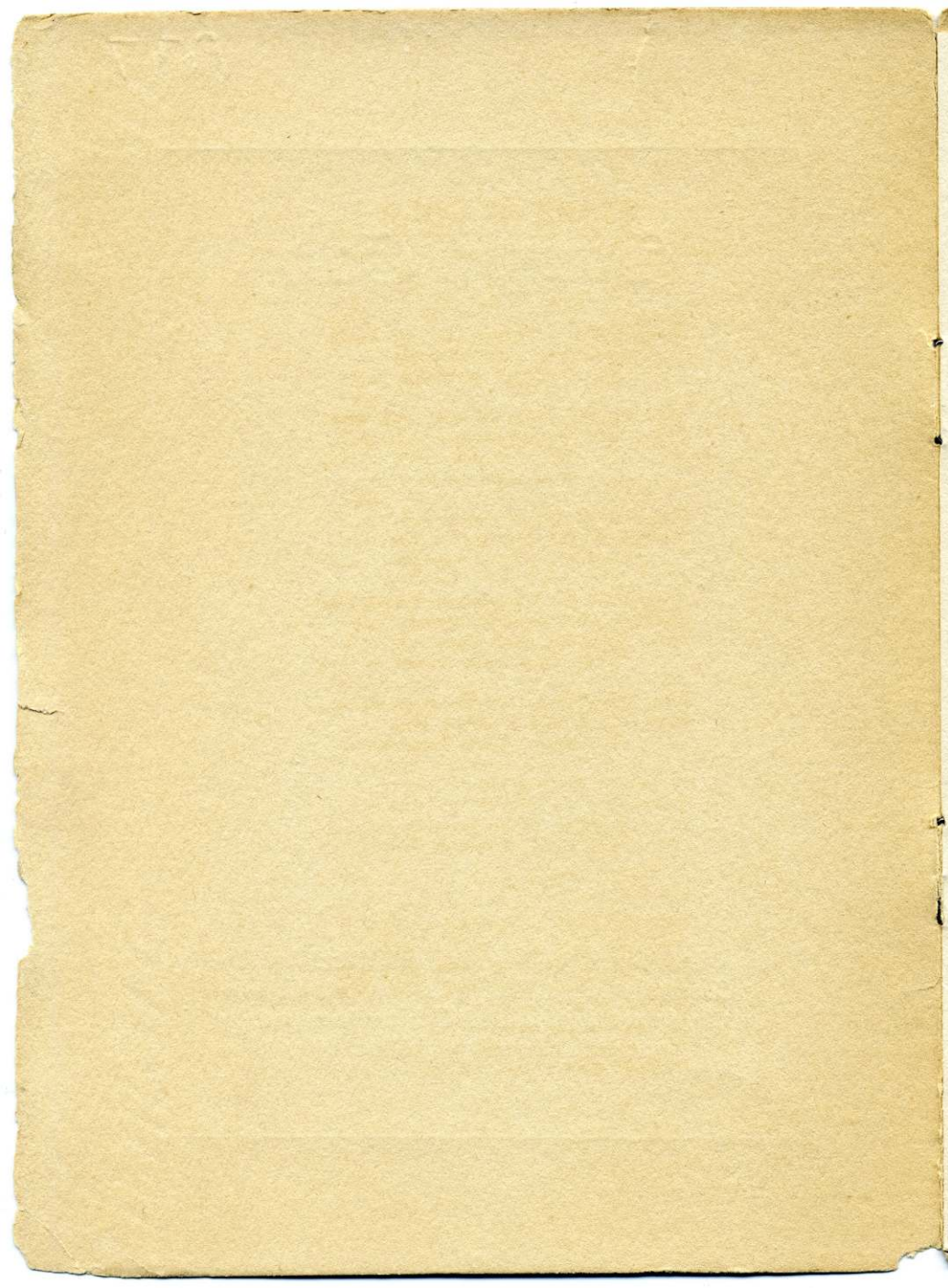
Stars of Gold



By WAITMAN BARBE



*Read March 6, 1919, at the services held in
Commencement Hall, West Virginia Univer-
sity, in memory of the University men who
gave their lives in the Great War*



STARS OF GOLD

I.

With cheers for every star, we flung
Our flag a year ago and sung
 The songs of marching men;
 And all the season through
We proudly filled the flag with stars
Until they crowded field and bars,
 And still we cheer'd—for then
 Our stars were all of blue.

But now in silence do we raise
Another flag too dear for praise,
 And every head we bow
 And for awhile withhold
Our cheers for banners filled with blue:
Another color shineth through
 The field and bars—for now
 These stars have turned to gold.

The night brings out the stars we say:
And now behold a Milky Way
 The night of war hath blazed
 Across the heaven's gate—
A belt of glory made of names
That shine forever steady flames,
 Forever to be praised,
 Above our Mountain State.

DIEGE.

*How the place is changed today
Since the hour they went away!
Changed the hopes of those they left,
Hopes of those that loved them best!
Broken is the golden bowl,
Broken too the mother-soul
Who despite her pride and trust
Waileth ever, "Dust to dust!"*

II.

We call the roll, and every name
Says *Here!* from out the cloudless flame
 Where Glory's banner waves
 In folds that never fade.
Call out the roll, so long and fair,
It sounds like distant words of prayer
 Above their sacred graves
 Where'er their bones are laid.

Call out the roll: each name a star,
Each star a poem nobler far
 Than aught in my poor powers;
 And if unknown there be
Asleep in some far distant place
A lad whose name we cannot trace—
 Some unknown lad of ours—
 O lad, this line's for thee!

This flag in some far future day
With reverent hands we'll lay away,
 But still these stars shall beam
 Above our campus old
And in our hearts for evermore
Until upon some radiant shore
 All stars of blue shall gleam
 Beside them, turned to gold.

DIEGE.

*How the campus lacks their feet,
For we never more shall meet
Them on the Circle, in the hall,
Greet them never more at all;
Woodburn waits for them to come,
Woodburn waits, her voice is dumb.
How the place is changed today
Since the hour they went away!*

III.

These stars are all of equal size,
Made so by equal sacrifice:
 No less or greater light
 In the Brotherhood of Death.
The deeds by which they won the star
Recorded were by a Registrar
 Across the sky of night
 While angels held their breath.

Nor does their star at all depend
Upon the place that saw the end
 Of all they had to give,
 Of all they had to pay—
On field of France, in cantonment,
In hospital, where'er was spent
 (That honor still might live)
 Their last, their last great day.

Some walked with us these college ways
For years and gained the scholar's praise;
 Some tarried but a space
 Until their finals came;
But who shall say when patriots fall
That place is not alike for all
 In God's eternal grace
 And time's eternal fame?

DIRGE.

*How the hills shall miss their voice
When our lusty men rejoice
Singing songs of work or play
In the new and better day!
How the State shall miss them when
She shall need the strength of men!
How the heart of love shall wait
Long, so long, at the open gate!*

IV.

A banner Blue and Gold, I ween,
Is dropped by spirit-hands unscen
 Tonight upon the mound
 Where each his rest doth keep;
Above each grave that spirit bends
And whispers, *Alma Mater sends*
 Me here to bless the ground
 Where son of hers doth sleep!

The grass shall grow and roses blow,
And time assuage the grief we know,
 But each returning year
 When March comes round anew
That spirit shall its visit keep
Above each grave to watch and weep
 And plant the banner there,
 The flag of Gold and Blue.

The grass shall fail, the rose shall fall,
The ancient wind shall o'er them call
 In Winters far away
 When we shall be forgot,
But *Alma Mater* still shall go
In spirit where her sons lie low,
 Till she herself decay
 And all that is is not.

PAEAN.

How the world has leapt to light
Into day from out the night!
How the world, redeemed anew,
 Sees at last its dreams come true:
Dreams of poets and of seers,
Dreamed through immemorial years!
How the Nations rise and sing
Praises to Jehovah, King,
Him Who rideth on the storm,
Who upholdeth with His arm!
God of earth and sky and sea,
These our men we leave with thee!

