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GOLDEN STARS

BY HENRY VAN DYKE

The Valley of Vision
Fighting for Peace
The Unknown Quantity
The Ruling Passion
The Blue Flower

Out-of-Doors in the Holy Land
Days Off
Little Rivers
Fisherman's Luck

Poems, Collection in one volume

Golden Stars
The Red Flower
The Grand Canyon, and Other Poems
The White Bees, and Other Poems
The Builders, and Other Poems
Music, and Other Poems
The Toiling of Felix, and Other Poems
The House of Rimmon

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

GOLDEN STARS

AND OTHER VERSES

FOLLOWING "THE RED FLOWER"

BY

HENRY VAN DYKE

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1919

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NOTE

The only reason for printing this little book is that many people have expressed a desire to have the memorial poem, "Golden Stars," in a permanent form.

The other verses are included simply because they are a wayside record of some of the varied feelings of an old lover of peace who was willing to fight for it,—feelings which may find a response in other American hearts.

HENRY VAN DYKE.
AVALON, JANUARY 6, 1919.

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THE PEACEFUL WARRIOR

I have no joy in strife,

Peace is my great desire;

Yet God forbid I lose my life

Through fear to face the fire.

A peaceful man must fight

For that which peace demands,—

Freedom and faith, honor and right,

Defend with heart and hands.

Farewell, my friendly books;

Farewell, ye woods and streams;

The fate that calls me forward looks

To a duty beyond dreams.

Oh, better to be dead

With a face turned to the sky,

Than live beneath a slavish dread

And serve a giant lie.

Stand up, my heart, and strive

For the things most dear to thee!

Why should we care to be alive

Unless the world is free?

May, 1918.

[Pg 3]

THE WINDS OF WAR-NEWS

The winds of war-news change and veer
Now westerly and full of cheer,
Now easterly, depressing, sour
With tidings of the Teutons' power.

But thou, America, whose heart
With brave Allies has taken part,

Be not a weathercock to change
With these wild winds that shift and range.

Be thou a compass ever true,
Through sullen clouds or skies of blue,
To that great star which rules the night,—
The star of Liberty and Right.

Lover of peace, oh set thy soul,
Thy strength, thy wealth, thy conscience whole,
To win the peace thine eyes foresee,—
The triumph of Democracy.

December 19, 1917.

[Pg 4]

RIGHTEOUS WRATH

There are many kinds of hatred, as many kinds of fire;
And some are fierce and fatal with murderous desire;
And some are mean and craven, revengeful, sullen, slow,
They hurt the man that holds them more than they hurt his foe.

And yet there is a hatred that purifies the heart:
The anger of the better against the baser part,
Against the false and wicked, against the tyrant's sword,
Against the enemies of love, and all that hate the Lord.

O cleansing indignation, O flame of righteous wrath,
Give me a soul to feel thee and follow in thy path!
Save me from selfish virtue, arm me for fearless fight,
And give me strength to carry on, a soldier of the Right!

January, 1918.

[Pg 5]

FACTA NON VERBA

Deeds not Words: I say so too!
And yet I find it somehow true,
A word may help a man in need,
To nobler act and braver deed.

[Pg 6]

FROM GLORY UNTO GLORY

AMERICAN FLAG SONG

I

O dark the night and dim the day

When first our flag arose;

It fluttered bravely in the fray

To meet o'erwhelming foes.

Our fathers saw the splendor shine,

They dared and suffered all;

They won our freedom by the sign—

The holy sign, the radiant sign—

Of the stars that never fall.

Chorus

All hail to thee, Young Glory!

Among the flags of earth

We'll ne'er forget the story

Of thy heroic birth.

II

[Pg 7]

O wild the later storm that shook

The pillars of the State,

When brother against brother took

The final arms of fate.

But union lived and peace divine

Enfolded brothers all;

The flag floats o'er them with the sign—

The loyal sign, the equal sign—

Of the stars that never fall.

Chorus

All hail to thee, Old Glory!

Of thee our heart's desire

Foretells a golden story,

For thou hast come through fire.

O fiercer than all wars before

That raged on land or sea,

The Giant Robber's world-wide war

For the things that shall not be!

Thy sister banners hold the line;

To thee, dear flag, they call;

And thou hast joined them with the sign—

The heavenly sign, the victor sign—

Of the stars that never fall.

Chorus

All hail to thee, New Glory!

We follow thee unfurled

To write the larger story

Of Freedom for the World.

September 4, 1918.

SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC

Who knows how many thousand years ago
The twelfold Zodiac was made to show
The course of stars above and men below?

The great sun plows his furrow by its "lines":
From all its "houses" mystic meaning shines:
Deep lore of life is written in its "signs."

Aries—Sacrifice.

Snow-white and sacred is the sacrifice
That Heaven demands for what our heart doth prize:
The man who fears to suffer, ne'er can rise.

Taurus—Strength.

Rejoice, my friend, if God has made you strong:
Put forth your force to move the world along:
Yet never shame your strength to do a wrong.

Gemini—Brotherhood.

Bitter his life who lives for self alone,
Poor would he be with riches and a throne:
But friendship doubles all we are and own.

Cancer—The Wisdom of Retreat.

Learn from the crab, O runner fresh and fleet,
Sideways to move, or backward, when discreet;
Life is not all advance,—sometimes retreat!

Leo—Fire.

[Pg 10]

The sign of Leo is the sign of fire.
Hatred we hate: but no man should desire
A heart too cold to flame with righteous ire.

Virgo—Love.

Mysterious symbol, words are all in vain
To tell the secret power by which you reign,
The more we love, the less we can explain.

Libra—Justice.

Examine well the scales with which you weigh;
Let justice rule your conduct every day;
For when you face the Judge you'll need fair play

Scorpio—Self-Defense.

There's not a creature in the realm of night
But has the wish to live, likewise the right:
Don't tread upon the scorpion, or he'll fight.

Sagittarius—The Archer.

Life is an arrow, therefore you must know
What mark to aim at, how to use the bow,—
Then draw it to the head and let it go!

Capricornus—The Goat.

The goat looks solemn, yet he likes to run,
And leap the rocks, and gambol in the sun:
The truly wise enjoy a little fun.

Aquarius—Water.

[Pg 11]

"Like water spilt upon the ground,"—alas,
Our little lives flow swiftly on and pass;
Yet may they bring rich harvests and green grass!

Last of the sacred signs, ye bring to me
A word of hope, a word of mystery,—
We all are swimmers in God's mighty sea.

February 28. 1918.

[Pg 12]

BRITAIN, FRANCE, AMERICA

The rough expanse of democratic sea
Which parts the lands that live by liberty
Is no division; for their hearts are one.
To fight together till their cause is won.

For land and water let us make our pact,
And seal the solemn word with valiant act:
No continent is firm, no ocean pure,
Until on both the rights of man are sure.

April, 1917.

[Pg 13]

THE RED CROSS

Sign of the Love Divine

That bends to bear the load

Of all who suffer, all who bleed,

Along life's thorny road:

Sign of the Heart Humane,

That through the darkest fight

Would bring to wounded friend and foe

A ministry of light:

O dear and holy sign,

Lead onward like a star!

The armies of the just are thine,

And all we have and are.

EASTER ROAD

1918

Under the cloud of world-wide war,
While earth is drenched with sorrow,
I have no heart for idle merrymaking,
Or for the fashioning of glad raiment.—
I will retrace the divine footmarks,
On the Road of the first Easter

Down through the valley of utter darkness
Dripping with blood and tears;
Over the hill of the skull, the little hill of great anguish,
The ambushade of Death.
Into the no-man's-land of Hades
Bearing despatches of hope to spirits in prison,
Mortally stricken and triumphant
Went the faithful Captain of Salvation.

Then upward, swiftly upward,—
Victory, liberty, glory,
The feet that were wounded walked in the tranquil garden,
Bathed in dew and the light of deathless dawn. O my soul, my comrades, soldiers of freedom,
Follow the pathway of Easter, for there is no other,
Follow it through to peace, yea, follow it fighting.

[Pg 15]

This Armageddon is not darker than Calvary.
The day will break when the Dragon is vanquished;
He that exalteth himself as God shall be cast down,
And the Lords of war shall fall,
And the long, long terror be ended,
Victory, justice, peace enduring!
They that die in this cause shall live forever,
And they that live shall never die,
They shall rejoice together in the Easter of a new world.

March 31, 1918.

[Pg 16]

AMERICA'S WELCOME HOME

Oh, gallantly they fared forth in khaki and in blue,
America's crusading host of warriors bold and true;
They battled for the rights of man beside our brave Allies,
And now they're coming home to us with glory in their eyes.

Oh, it's home again, and home again, America for me!

Our hearts are turning home again and there we long to be,

In our beautiful big country beyond the ocean bars,

Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

Our boys have seen the Old World as none have seen before.
They know the grisly horror of the German gods of war:
The noble faith of Britain and the hero-heart of France,
The soul of Belgium's fortitude and Italy's romance.

[Pg 17]

They bore our country's great word across the rolling sea,
"America swears brotherhood with all the just and free."

They wrote that word victorious on fields of mortal strife,
And many a valiant lad was proud to seal it with his life.

Oh, welcome home in Heaven's peace, dear spirits of the dead!
And welcome home ye living sons America hath bred!
The lords of war are beaten down, your glorious task is done;
You fought to make the whole world free, and the victory is won.

Now it's home again, and home again, our hearts are turning west,

Of all the lands beneath the sun America is best.

We're going home to our own folks, beyond the ocean bars,

Where the air is full of sunlight and the flag is full of stars.

November 11, 1918. A sequel to "America For Me," written in 1909.

[Pg 18]

THE SURRENDER OF THE GERMAN FLEET

Ship after ship, and every one with a high-resounding name,
From the robber-nest of Heligoland the German war-fleet came;
Not victory or death they sought, but a rendezvous of shame.

Sing out, sing out,

A joyful shout,

Ye lovers of the sea!

The "Kaiser" and the "Kaiserin,"

The "König" and the "Prinz,"

The potentates of piracy,

Are coming to surrender,

And the ocean shall be free.

They never dared the final fate of battle on the blue;
Their sea-wolves murdered merchantmen and mocked the drowning crew;
They stained the wave with martyr-blood,—but we sent our transports through!

[Pg 19]

What flags are these that dumbly droop from the gaff o' the mainmast tall?
The black of the Kaiser's iron cross, the red of the Empire's fall!
Come down, come down, ye pirate flags. Yea, strike your colors all.

The Union Jack and the Tricolor and the Starry Flag o' the West
Shall guard the fruit of Freedom's war and the victory confest,
The flags of the brave and just and free shall rule on the ocean's breast.

Sing out, sing out,

A mighty shout,

Ye lovers of the sea!

The "Kaiser" and the "Kaiserin,"

The "König" and the "Prinz"

The robber-lords of death and sin,

Have come to their surrender,

And the ocean shall be free!

November 20, 1918.

[Pg 20]

GOLDEN STARS

I

It was my lot of late to travel far
Through all America's domain,
A willing, grey-haired servitor
Bearing the Fiery Cross of righteous war.
And everywhere, on mountain, vale and plain,
In crowded street and lonely cottage door,
I saw the symbol of the bright blue star.
Millions of stars! Rejoice, dear land, rejoice
That God hath made thee great enough to give
Beneath thy starry flag unfurled
A gift to all the world,—
Thy living sons that Liberty might live.

[Pg 21]

II

It seems but yesterday they sallied forth
Boys of the east, the west, the south, the north,
High-hearted, keen, with laughter and with song,
Fearless of lurking danger on the sea,
Eager to fight in Flanders or in France
Against the monstrous German wrong,
And sure of victory!
Brothers in soul with British and with French
They held their ground in many a bloody trench;
And when the swift word came—
Advance!
Over the top they went through waves of flame,—
Confident, reckless, irresistible,
Real Americans,—
Their rush was never stayed
Until the foe fell back, defeated and dismayed.
O land that bore them, write upon thy roll
Of battles won
To liberate the human soul,
Château Thierry and Saint Mihiel
And the fierce agony of the Argonne;
Yea, count among thy little rivers, dear
Because of friends whose feet have trodden there,
The Marne, the Meuse, and the Moselle.

[Pg 22]

III

Now the vile sword
In Potsdam forged and bathed in hell,
Is beaten down, the victory given
To the sword forged in faith and bathed in heaven.
Now home again our heroes come:
Oh, welcome them with bugle and with drum,
Ring bells, blow whistles, make a joyful noise
Unto the Lord,
And welcome home our blue-star boys,
Whose manhood has made known
To all the world America,
Unselfish, brave and free, the Great Republic,
Who lives not to herself alone.

[Pg 23]

IV

But many a lad we hold
Dear in our heart of hearts
Is missing from the home-returning host.
Ah, say not they are lost,
For they have found and given their life
In sacrificial strife:
Their service stars have changed from blue to gold!
That sudden rapture took them far away,
Yet are they here with us today,
Even as the heavenly stars we cannot see
Through the bright veil of sunlight
Shed their influence still
On our vexed life, and promise peace
From God to all men of good will.

[Pg 24]

V

What wreaths shall we entwine For our dear boys to deck their holy shrine?
Mountain-laurel, morning-glory,
Goldenrod and asters blue,
Purple loosestrife, prince's-pine,
Wild-azalea, meadow-rue,
Nodding-lilies, columbine,—
All the native blooms that grew
In these fresh woods and pastures new,
Wherein they loved to ramble and to play.
Bring no exotic flowers:
America was in their hearts,
And they are ours
For ever and a day.

[Pg 25]

VI

O happy warriors, forgive the tear

Falling from eyes that miss you;

Forgive the word of grief from mother-lips

That ne'er on earth shall kiss you;

Hear only what our hearts would have you hear,—

Glory and praise and gratitude and pride

From the dear country in whose cause you died.

Now you have run your race and won your prize,

Old age shall never burden you, the fears

And conflicts that beset our lingering years

Shall never vex your souls in Paradise.

Immortal, young, and crowned with victory,

From life's long battle you have found release.

And He who died for all on Calvary

Has welcomed you, brave soldiers of the cross,

Into eternal Peace.

[Pg 26]

VII

Come, let us gird our loins and lift our load,
Companions who are left on life's rough road,
And bravely take the way that we must tread
To keep true faith with our beloved dead.
To conquer war they dared their lives to give,
To safeguard peace our hearts must learn to live.
Help us, dear God, our forward faith to hold!
We want a better world than that of old.
Lead us on paths of high endeavor,
Toiling upward, climbing ever,
Ready to suffer for the right,
Until at last we gain a loftier height,
More worthy to behold
Our guiding stars, our hero-stars of gold.

Ode for the Memorial Service,
Princeton University, December 15, 1918.

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*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GOLDEN STARS, AND OTHER VERSES FOLLOWING
"THE RED FLOWER" ***

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