

Armistice Day 1920

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IN silent reverence we stand
 In the presence of the spirits of the dead;
 In the shadow of the massive stone,
 Raised by loving hands for them,
 Amidst the familiar scenes of school.

THE day opens gray but hopeful.
 'Twas only two short years ago
 The sounding bugle rent the air:
 "The war is o'er; fight no more,
 For liberty is won."

FROM our beloved school had gone
 Sixty-two and a hundred more.
 On that eventful morn, at the roll's slow call,
 Eight brave boys were silent—
 Were silent. They were no more.

THEY went to the Great Beyond,
 That lightly they termed, "Out West,"
 Led by Duty's immortal call.
 They gave their all, their faces aglow,
 And hearts at peace with the world.

TODAY they are back again,
 These eight whom we loved so well.
 Their kindly eyes, peering thru the shadows,
 Seek their school mates and friends
 Gathered 'round the massive stone.

THEY'VE come back today,
 To visit us in spirit;
 To search us. To learn if we are true,
 And if our hearts are in full accord
 With the spirit of their sacrifice.

THEIR glance is piercing,
 Stayed not by our bodies,
 Penetrating to our very souls;
 They seek our thoughts, these departed;
 They seek to know.

THEY ask of us this question,
 "Is our America true?"
 —The land they loved
 And for which they died—
 "Oh, is America true?"

HAVE you, in two short years, forgot,
 Become enamored of the lust of self,
 Of power, of gold, of vain things, all,
 That are so slight and fleeting?"
 They, the eight, look sorrowfully on.

MY heart speaks out to them,
 To these dear, brave boys of ours,
 To keep their faith in us.
 Down deep in our hearts, my boys,
 We love you. We are true.

YOUR sacrifice, on the hills of France,
 Where even now the poppies grow,
 Has touched us,—reached our heart.
 That story—'twill be told for ages
 In every home and school and mart.

WE are gathered again to pledge,—
 In your presence and in God's—
 Our lives, our fortunes, and our honor.
 For the sacrifice you made,
 Never to forget you;

NEVER to forget your deeds;
 Never to forget the land you loved;
 Never to slight your memory
 By deed or e'en by thought,
 That would offend you;

BUT on every day like this,
 Commemorating the great struggle,
 Which claimed you among the rest;
 To worship at this shrine
 And give full measure of our love.

THIS is the message to you today,
 Joined in by this loving throng.
 To you, the spirits of the eight:
 Brustad, Ecklund, Stalemo, Rud,
 Houglum, Kittleson, Layton, Dale.

THE veil is drawn;
 The silent spirits leave,
 Not in sorrow, nor in woe,
 For we, the living, will keep true
 Their memories for aye.