



THE SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR

by Brander Matthews

National hymn is one of the things which cannot be made to order. No man has ever yet sat him down and taken up his pen and said, "I will write a national hymn," and composed either words or music which the nation was willing to take for its own. The making of the song of a people is a happy accident, not to be accomplished by taking thought. It must be the result of fiery feeling long confined, and suddenly finding vent in burning words or moving strains. Sometimes the heat and the pressure of emotion have been fierce enough and intense enough to call forth at once both words and music, and to weld them together indissolubly once and for all. Almost always the maker of the song does not suspect the abiding value of his work; he has wrought unconsciously, moved by a power within; he has written for immediate relief to himself, and with no thought of fame or the future; he has builded better than he knew. The great national lyric is the result of the conjunction of the hour and the man. Monarchs cannot command it, and even poets are often powerless to achieve it. No one of the great national hymns has been written by a great poet. But for his one immortal lyric, neither the author of the "Marseillaise" nor the author of the "Wacht am Rhein" would have his line in the biographical dictionaries. But when a song has once taken root in the hearts of a people, time itself is powerless against it. The flat and feeble "Partant pour la Syrie," which a filial fiat made the hymn of imperial France, had to give way to the strong and virile notes of the "Marseillaise," when there was need to arouse the martial spirit of the French in 1870. The noble measures of "God Save the King," as simple and dignified a national hymn as any country can boast, lift up the hearts of the English people; and the brisk tune of the "British Grenadiers" has swept away many a man into the ranks of the recruiting regiment. The English are rich in war tunes; and the pathetic "Girl I left behind me" encourages and sustains both those who go to the front and those who remain at home. Here in the United States we have no "Marseillaise," no "God Save the King," no "Wacht am Rhein"; we have but "Yankee Doodle" and the "Star-spangled Banner." More than one enterprising poet, and more than one aspiring musician, has volunteered to take the contract to supply the deficiency; as yet no one has succeeded. "Yankee Doodle" we got during the Revolution, and the "Star-spangled Banner" was the gift of the war of 1812; from the Civil War we have received at least two war songs which, as war songs simply, are finer than either of these, - "John Brown's Body" and "Marching through Georgia."

Of the purely lyrical outburst which the war called forth, but little trace is now to be detected in literature except by special students. In most cases neither words nor music have had vitality enough to survive a quarter of a century. Really, indeed, two things only survive, one Southern and the other Northern, one a war-cry in verse, the other a

martial tune: one is the lyric "My Maryland," and the other is the marching song "John Browns Body." The origin and development of the latter, the rude chant to which a million of the soldiers of the Union kept time, is uncertain and involved in dispute. The history of the former may be declared exactly ; and by the courtesy of those who did the deed - for the making of a war song is of a truth a deed at arms - I am enabled to state fully the circumstances under which it was written, set to music, and first sung before the soldiers of the South.

MY MARYLAND

*The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland ! His torch is at thy temple door,
Maryland! Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle-queen of yore,
Maryland ! My Maryland !*

*Hark to an exiled son's appeal,
Maryland ! My Mother-State, to thee I kneel !
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland! My Maryland!*

*Thou wilt not cower in the dust,
Maryland ! Thy beaming sword shall never rust,
Maryland !
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland ! My Maryland!*

*Come ! 'Tis the red dawn of the day,
Maryland ! Come with thy panoplied array,
Maryland !
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
Maryland! My Maryland !*

*Dear Mother, burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland ! Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland !
She meets her sisters on the plain,
Sic Semper 'Tis the proud refrain
That baffles minions back amain,
Maryland ! Arise, in majesty again,
Maryland ! My Maryland !*

*Come, for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland ! Come, for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland !
Come to thine own heroic throng,
Stalking with liberty along,
And chaunt thy dauntless slogan-song,
Maryland! My Maryland!*

*I see the blush upon thy cheek,
 Maryland ! For thou wast ever bravely meek,
 Maryland !
 But to ! there surges forth a shriek;
 From hill to hill, from creek to creek,
 Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
 Maryland ! My Maryland !*

*Thou wilt not yield the Vandal toll,
 Maryland ! Thou wilt not crook to his control,
 Maryland ! Better the fire upon thee roll,
 Better the shot, the blade, the bowl,
 Than crucifixion of the soul,
 Maryland ! My Maryland !*

*I hear the distant thunder-hum,
 Maryland! The Old Line bugle, fife and drum,
 Maryland !
 She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb !
 Huzza! She spurns the Northern scum !
 She breathes ! She burns ! She'll come !
 She'll come !
 Maryland ! My Maryland !*

(Perhaps there is no need now for even a line of good-natured depreciation of some of the terms used in this song, overwrought and inaccurate as they are. As but few, North or South, have ever seen the entire poem, it is printed here in full from the author's manuscript. Its lines show plainly enough that they owe their being to a white-heat of emotion. It is valuable, therefore, historically, as a record of the feelings of the hour in the South, although not of the facts of the hour either in Baltimore or at the North.)

"My Maryland!" was written by Mr. James R. Randall, a native of Baltimore, and now residing in Augusta, Georgia. The poet was a professor of English literature and the classics in Poydras College at Pointe Coupe, on the Fausse Rivière, in Louisiana, about seven miles from the Mississippi ; and there in April, 1861, he read in the New Orleans "Delta" the news of the attack on the Massachusetts troops as they passed through Baltimore.

"*This account excited me greatly,*" Mr. Randall writes in answer to my request for information; "*I had long been absent from my native city, and the startling event there inflamed my mind. That night I could not sleep, for my nerves were all unstrung, and I could not dismiss what I had read in the paper from my mind. About midnight I rose, lit a candle, and went to my desk. Some powerful spirit appeared to possess me, and almost involuntarily I proceeded to write the song of 'My Maryland.'* I remember that the idea appeared to first take shape as music in the brain - some wild air that I cannot now recall. The whole poem was dashed off rapidly when once begun. It was not composed in cold blood, but under what may be called a conflagration of the senses, if not an inspiration of the intellect. I was stirred to a desire for some way linking my name with that of my native State, if not 'with my land's language.' But I never expected to do this with one single, supreme effort, and no one was more surprised than I was at the wide-spread and instantaneous popularity of the lyric I had been so strangely stimulated to write." Mr. Randall read the poem the next morning to the college boys, and at their suggestion sent it to the "Delta," in which it was first printed, and from which it was copied into nearly every Southern journal. "*I did not concern myself much*

about it," Mr. Randall adds, "but very soon, from all parts of the country, there was borne to me, in my remote place of residence, evidence that I had made a great hit, and that, whatever might be the fate of the Confederacy, the song would survive it."

Published in the last days of April, 1861, when every eye was fixed on the border States, the stirring stanzas of the Tyrtman bard appeared in the very nick of time. There is often a feeling afloat in the minds of men, undefined and vague for want of one to give it form, and held in solution, as it were, until a chance word dropped in the ear of a poet suddenly crystallizes this feeling into song, in which all may see clearly and sharply reflected what in their own thought was shapeless and hazy. It was Mr. Randall's good fortune to be the instrument through which the South spoke. By a natural reaction his burning lines helped "to fire the Southern heart." To do their work well, his words needed to be wedded to music. Unlike the authors of the "Star-spangled Banner" and the "Marseillaise," the author of "My Maryland" had not written it to fit a tune already familiar. It was left for a lady of Baltimore to lend the lyric the musical wings it needed to enable it to reach every camp-fire of the Southern armies. To the courtesy of this lady, then Miss Hetty Cary, and now the wife of Professor H. Newell Martin, of Johns Hopkins University, I am indebted for a picturesque description of the marriage of the words to the music, and of the first singing of the song before the Southern troops.

The house of Mrs. Martin's father was the headquarters for the Southern sympathizers of Baltimore. Correspondence, money, clothing, supplies of all kinds went thence through the lines to the young men of the city who had joined the Confederate army.

The enthusiasm of the girls who worked and of the 'boys' who watched for their chance to slip through the lines to Dixie's land found vent and inspiration in such patriotic songs as could be made or adapted to suit our needs. The glee club was to hold its meeting in our parlors one evening early in June, and my sister, Miss Jennie Cary, being the only musical member of the family, had charge of the programme on the occasion. With a school-girl's eagerness to score a success, she resolved to secure some new and ardent expression of feelings that by this time were wrought up to the point of explosion. In vain she searched through her stock of songs and airs - nothing seemed intense enough to suit her. Aroused by her tone of despair, I came to the rescue with the suggestion that she should adapt the words of "Maryland, my Maryland," which had been constantly on my lips since the appearance of the lyric a few days before in the South. I produced the paper and began declaiming the verses. "Lauriger Horatius!" she exclaimed, and in a flash the immortal song found voice in the stirring air so perfectly adapted to it. That night, when her contralto voice rang out the stanzas, the refrain rolled forth from every throat present without pause or preparation; and the enthusiasm communicated itself with such effect to a crowd assembled beneath our open windows as to endanger seriously the liberties of the party.

"Lauriger Horatius" has long been a favorite college song, and it had been introduced into the Cary household by Mr. Burton N. Harrison, then a Yale student. The air to which it is sung is used also for a lovely German lyric, "Tannenbaum, O Tannenbaum," which Longfellow has translated "O Hemlock Tree." The transmigration of tunes is too large and fertile a subject for me to do more here than refer to it. The taking of the air of a jovial college song to use as the setting of a fiery war-lyric may seem strange and curious, but only to those who are not familiar with the adventures and transformations a tune is often made to undergo.

Hopkinson's "Hail Columbia!" for example, was written to the tune of the "President's March," just as Mrs. Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" was written to "John Brown's Body." The "Wearing of the Green," of the Irishman, is sung to the same air as the "Benny Havens, O!" of the West-Pointer. The "Star-spangled Banner" has to make shift with the second-hand music of "Anacreon in Heaven"; while our other national air, "Yankee Doodle," uses over the notes of an old English nursery rhyme, "Lucy Locket," once a personal lampoon in the days of the "Beggars' Opera," and now surviving in the "Baby's Opera" of Mr. Walter Crane. "My Country, 'tis of Thee," is set to the truly British tune of "God Save the King," the origin of which is doubtful; as it is claimed by the French and the Germans as well as the English. In the hour of battle a war-tune is subject to the right of capture, and, like the cannon taken from the enemy, it is turned against its maker.

To return to "My Maryland", a few weeks after the welding of the words and the music, Mrs. Martin with her brother and sister went through the lines, conveying several trunks full of military clothing, and wearing concealed about her person a flag bearing the arms of Maryland, a gift from the ladies of Baltimore to the Maryland troops in the Confederate army. In consequence of reports which were borne back to the Union authorities, the ladies were forbidden to return. "*We were living,*" so Mrs. Martin writes me, "*in Virginia in exile, when, shortly after the battle of Manassas, General Beauregard, hearing of our labors and sufferings in behalf of the Marylanders who had already done such gallant service in his command, invited us to visit them at his headquarters near Fairfax Court House, sending a pass and an escort for us, and the friends by whom we should be accompanied. Our party encamped the first night in tents prepared for us at Manassas, with my kinsman, Captain Sterrell, who was in charge of the fortifications there. We were serenaded by the famous Washington Artillery of New Orleans, aided by all the fine voices within reach. Captain Sterrell expressed our thanks, and asked if there were any service we might render in return. 'Let us hear a woman's voice,' was the cry which arose in response. And, standing in the tent-door, under cover of the darkness, my sister sang 'My Maryland!' This, I believe, was the birth of the song in the army. The refrain was speedily caught up and tossed back to us from hundreds of rebel throats. As the last notes died away, there surged forth from the gathering through a wild shout - 'We will break her chains! She shall be free! She shall be free! Three cheers and a tiger for Maryland!' And they were given with a will. There was not a dry eye in the tent, and, we were told the next day, not a cap with a rim on it in camp. Nothing could have kept Mr. Randall's verses from living and growing into a power. To us fell the happy chance of first giving them voice. In a few weeks 'My Maryland!' had found its way to the heart of our whole people, and become a great national song.*"

I wish I could call as charming and as striking a witness to set forth the origin of "John Brown's Body." The genesis of both words and music is obscure and involved. The raw facts of historical criticism - names, places, dates - are deficient. The martial hymn has been called a spontaneous generation of the uprising of the North - a self-made song, which sang itself into being of its own accord. Some have treated it as a sudden evolution from the inner consciousness of the early soldiers all aglow with free-soil enthusiasm; and these speak of it as springing, like Minerva from the head of Jove, full-armed and mature. Others have more happily likened it to Topsy, in that it never was born, it grew; and this latter theory has the support of the facts as far as they can be disentangled from a maze of fiction and legend. A tentative and conjectural

reconstruction of the story of the song is all I dare venture upon; and I stand corrected in anticipation.

In 1856, Mr. William Steffe, of Philadelphia, was requested by a fire-company of Charleston, South Carolina, to write an air to a series of verses, the chorus of which began,

"Say, bummers, will you meet us?"

After the air had served its purpose, a new set of words was fitted to it, and it went on its way as a camp-meeting hymn,

"Say, brothers, will you meet us?"

In the four years between the composing of the tune and the outbreak of the war, the camp-meeting hymn had time to become popular throughout the North. Probably - although I have not been able to verify the supposition - "Say, brothers, will you meet us?" (like "Dixie," from which it was soon to part company) served as an air for Lincoln and Hamlin campaign songs in the canvass of 1860. Certainly the tune was familiar enough in New England by the time Lincoln was inaugurated.

John Brown had been hanged in December, 1859. The feeling which that execution called forth in Massachusetts found relief in a meeting at Faneuil Hall. A recent writer has recorded his recollection of that evening, and of the crowd of boys and youths parading the streets of Boston and singing to a familiar air a monotonous lament of which the burden was

*"Tell John Andrew,
Tell John Andrew,
Tell John Andrew
John Brown's dead!"*

A little more than a year later came the news of the shot against the flag at Sumter. Some memory of this street song seems to have survived, and to have combined chemically with the tune of "Say, brothers, will you meet us?" the time of which was modified to a march; and in this way "John Brown's Body" came into being. It was the song of the hour. There was a special taunt to the South in the use of the name of the martyr of abolition, while to the North that name was as a slogan. As the poet - a prophet again, for once - had written when John Brown was yet alive, though condemned to death:

*"But, Virginians, don't do it! For I tell you that the flagon,
Filled with blood of old Brown's offspring, was first poured by Southern hands;
And each drop from old Brown's life-veins, like the red gore of the dragon,
May spring up a vengeful fury, hissing through your slave-worn lands!
And old Brown,
Osawatomie Brown,
May trouble you more than ever, when you've nailed his coffin down!"*

If one may rely fully on Major Bosbyshell, to whose interesting paper in the "Grand Army Scout" I am indebted for much valuable suggestion, the song was put together by a quartet of men in the Second Battalion ("Tigers"), a Massachusetts command quartered at Fort Warren, in Boston Harbor, in April, 1861 - just at the time when "My Maryland" was getting itself sung at the South. This quartet, with many others of the "Tigers," enlisted in the Twelfth Massachusetts Volunteers, commanded by Colonel

Fletcher Webster. Beyond all question it was the Webster regiment which first adopted "John Brown's Body" as a marching song. The soldiers of this regiment sang it as they marched down Broadway in New York, July 24th, 1861, on their way from Boston to the front. They sang it incessantly until August, 1862, when Colonel Webster died, and when the tune had been taken up by the nation at large, and hundreds of thousands of soldiers were marching forward to the fight with the name of John Brown on their lips.

There was a majestic simplicity in the rhythm like the beating of mighty hammers. In the beginning the words were bare to the verge of barrenness. There was no lack of poets to fill them out. Henry Howard Brownell, the singer of the "Bay Fight" and the "River Fight," skillfully utilized the accepted lines, which he enriched with a deeper meaning. Then Mrs. Lowe wrote her "Battle Hymn of the Republic," perhaps the most resonant and elevated of the poems of American patriotism. Of late the air has been taken again by Mr. William Morris, poet and socialist, decorator and reformer, as the one to which shall be sung his eloquent and stirring "March of the Workers."

Curiously enough, the history of "Dixie" is not at all unlike the history of "John Brown's Body." "Dixie" was composed in 1859, by Mr. Dan D. Emmett, as a "walk-around" for Bryant's minstrels, then performing at Mechanics' Hall in New York. Mr. Emmett had traveled with circuses, and had heard the performers refer to the States south of Mason and Dixon's line as "Dixie's land," wishing themselves there as soon as the Northern climate began to be too severe for those who live in tents like the Arabs. It was on this expression of Northern circus performers,

"I wish I was in Dixie,"

that Mr. Emmett constructed his song. The "walk-around" hit the taste of the New York play-going public, and it was adopted at once by various bands of wandering minstrels, who sang and danced it in all parts of the Union. In the fall of 1860 Mrs. John Wood sang it in New Orleans in John Brougham's burlesque of "Pocahontas," and in New Orleans it took root. Without any authority from the composer, a New Orleans publisher had the air harmonized and arranged, and he issued it with words embodying the strong Southern feeling of the chief city of Louisiana. As from Boston "John Brown's Body" spread through the North, so from New Orleans "Dixie" spread through the South; and as Northern poets strove to find fit words for the one, so Southern poets wrote fiery lines to fill the measures of the other. Of the sets of verses written to "Dixie," the best, perhaps, is that by General Albert Pike, of Arkansas, who happens, by a fortuitous chance, to have been a native of Vermont. With Republican words "Dixie" had been used as a campaign song in 1860; and it was perhaps some vague remembrance of this which prompted Lincoln to have the air played by a band in Washington in 1865, a short time after the surrender at Appomattox, remarking that as we had captured the rebel army we had captured also the rebel tune.

From New Orleans also came another of the songs of the South, the "Bonnie Blue Flag." Mr. Randall writes me that "Dixie" and the "Bonnie Blue Flag" were the most popular of Southern songs. Like "Dixie," the "Bonnie Blue Flag" came from the theater. The tune is an old Hibernian melody, the "Irish Jaunting Car." The words were written by an Irish comedian, Harry McCarthy, and the song was first sung by his sister, Miss Marion McCarthy, at the Varieties Theater, in 1861. It was published by Mr. A. E. Blackmar, who writes to a friend of mine that General Butler "*made it very profitable by fining every man, woman, or child who sang, whistled, or played it on any instrument, \$25,*" besides arresting the publisher, destroying the sheet music, and fining him \$500.

In Louisiana, of course, there was also the "Marseillaise." *"The Creoles of New Orleans,"* Mr. Cable writes me, *"followed close by the Anglo-Americans of their town, took up the 'Marseillaise' with great enthusiasm, as they have always done whenever a war spirit was up. They did it when the British invaded Louisiana in 1814. It was good enough as it stood; they made no new adaptations of it, but sang it in French and English (I speak of 1861), dry so, 'as the Southern rustics say'. 'Dixie' started with the first mutter of war thunder ... I think the same is true of 'Lorena.' This doleful old ditty started at the start, and never stopped till the last musket was stacked and the last camp fire cold. It was, by all odds, the song nearest the Confederate soldier's heart. It was the 'Annie Laurie' of the Confederate trenches."*

Nowadays it is not a little difficult to detect in the rather mushy sentimentality of the words of "Lorena," or in the lugubrious wail of its music, any qualities which might account for the affection it was held in. But the vagaries of popular taste are inscrutable. Dr. Palmer's vigorous lyric, "Stonewall Jackson's Way," written within sound of the cannonading at Antietam, was so little sung that Mr. Randall thought it had not been set to music. I have, however, succeeded in discovering two airs to which it was sung, - one published by Mr. Blackmar, and the other the familiar "Duda, duda, day."

The Northern equivalent of "Lorena" is to be sought among the songs which made a lyric address to "Mother," and of which "Just before the Battle, Mother," may be taken as a type. "Mother, I've Come Home to Die," was sung with feeling and with humor by many a gallant fellow who is now gathered at the bivouac of the dead. Mr. George F. Root, of Chicago, was both the author and composer of "Just before the Battle, Mother," as he was also of the "Battle Cry of Freedom," and of "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp; the Boys are Marching." It is difficult to say which one of these three songs was the most popular; there was a touch of realistic pathos in "Just before the Battle, Mother," which brought the simple and unpretending words home to the hearts of the men who had girded on the sword and shouldered the musket. Yet captivity was not seldom more bitter to bear than death itself, and this gave point to the lament of the soldier who sat in his "prison-cell" and heard the tramp, tramp, tramp of the marching boys. Probably, however, the first favorite with the soldiers in the field, and certainly the song of Mr. Root's which has the best chance of surviving, is the "Battle Cry of Freedom." It was often ordered to be sung as the men marched into action. More than once its strains arose on the battle-field and made obedience more easy to the lyric command to rally round the flag. With the pleasant humor which never deserts the American, even in the hard tussle of war, the gentle lines of "Mary had a Little Lamb" were fitted snugly to the tune; and many a regiment shortened a weary march or went gayly into action, singing,

*"Mary had a little lamb,
Its fleece was white as snow,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom;
And everywhere that Mary went
The lamb was sure to go,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom."*

Now the song is sure of immortality, for it has become a part of those elective studies which are the chief gains of the college curriculum. At the hands of the American college boys, "Rally round the Flag" can get a renewed lease of life for twenty-one years more - or forever. A boy is your true conservative; he is the genuine guardian of ancient rites and customs, old rhymes and songs; he has the fullest reverence for age - if so be it is not incarnated in a "Prof." or a "Prex." Lowell, in declaring the antiquity of

the New World, says that *"we have also in America things amazingly old, as our boys, for example."* And the taking of the "Battle Cry of Freedom" by the colleges is only the fair exchange which is no robbery; for, as we have seen, it was from the college that the air of "Lauriger Horatius" was taken to speed the heated stanzas of "My Maryland." Another college song, - if the digression may be pardoned, - the "Upidee-Upida," to which we so wickedly sing the quatrains of Longfellow's "Excelsior," I have heard rising sonorously from the throats of a stalwart regiment of German Lamhhell in the summer of 1870, as they were on their way to the French frontier - and to Paris.

Although they came at the beginning of the war, "John Brown's Body" and the "Battle Cry of Freedom" have been sung scarcely more often than "Marching through Georgia," which could not have come into being until near the end of the fight. Now that the war has been over for twenty years and more, and the veteran has no military duty more harassing than fighting his battles o'er, "Marching through Georgia" has become the song dearest to his heart. The swinging rhythm of the tune and the homely directness of the words gave the song an instant popularity, increased by the fact that it commemorated the most striking episode of the war, the march to the sea. "Marching through Georgia" was written and composed by the late Henry C. Work. In his history of "Music in America," Professor Ritter refers to Stephen C. Foster, the composer of "Old Folks at Home," as one who said naively and gently what he had to say, without false pretension or bombastic phrases; and this praise may be applied also to Work, who had not a little of the folk-flavor which gives quality to Foster. Like Foster, Work was fond of reflecting the rude negro rhythms; and some of his best songs seem like actual echoes from the cotton-field and levee. "Wake, Nicodemus," "Kingdom Coming," and "Babylon is Fallen" have this savor of the soil, - sophisticated, it may be, and yet pungent and captivating. I have heard it suggested that "Marching through Georgia" was founded on a negro air, and also that it is a reminiscence of a bit of the "Rataplan" of the "Huguenots." It is possible that there is a little truth at the bottom of both of these stories. The "Huguenots" was frequently performed at the New Orleans Opera House before the war, and many a slave must have heard his young mistress singing and playing selections from Meyerbeer's music; and it may be that Work, in turn, overheard some negro's rambling recollection of the "Rataplan." This is idle conjecture, however; the tune of "Marching through Georgia" is fresh and spirited; and it bids fair - with "John Brown's Body" - to be the chief musical legacy of the war. Work was also the author and composer of two other songs which had their day, "Drafted into the Army" and "Brave Boys are They." The latter has had the honor of being sung of late by Mr. Cable, who heard first at a Southern camp-fire from the lips of a comrade the chorus of Northern origin, equally apt in its application in those troublous times to the homes on either side of Mason and Dixon's line:

*"Brave boys are they,
Gone at their country's call;
And yet - and yet we cannot forget
That many brave boys must fall."*

It was in the dark days of 1862, just after Lincoln had issued the proclamation asking for three hundred thousand volunteers to fill up the stricken ranks of the army and to carry out the cry which urged it "On to Richmond," that Mr. John Gibbons wrote a lyric

*"We are coming, Father Abraham,
Three hundred thousand more."*

which contributed not a little to the bringing about of the uprising it declared. The author of this ringing call to arms was a Hicksite Quaker, - "with a reasonable leaning, however, toward wrath in cases of emergency," as his son-in-law, Mr. James H. Morse, neatly puts it, in a recent letter to me. He joined the abolition movement in 1830, when he was barely twenty years old. Three years later he married a daughter of Isaac T. Hopper, the Quaker philanthropist. For a short time he was one of the editors of the "Anti-Slavery Standard," and, like many of the Quakers of his school, he was always ardent in the cause of negro freedom. At the outbreak of the war, Mrs. Gibbons and her eldest daughter went to the front, and they served in the hospitals until the end. While they were away the riots of '63 occurred, and their house in New York was sacked, Mr. Gibbons and the two younger daughters taking refuge with relatives in the house next door but one, and thence over the roofs to Eighth Avenue, where Mr. Joseph H. Choate had a carriage in waiting for them. The house was singled out for this attention because it had been illuminated when the Emancipation Proclamation was issued, - on which occasion it had been daubed and defiled with coal tar.

At the request of Mr. Morse, Mr. Gibbons has put on paper an account of the circumstances under which he wrote "We are coming, Father Abraham," and from this I am privileged to quote. It must be premised that Mr. Gibbons, although he had written verse - as who has not? - was best known as a writer on financial topics: he has published two books about banking, and he was for a while the financial editor of the "Evening Post." In 1862, after Lincoln had issued his call for volunteers, Mr. Gibbons used to take long walks alone, often talking to himself. "*I began to con over a song,*" he writes. The words seemed to fall into ranks and files, and to come with a measured step. Directly would come along a company of soldiers with fife and drum, and that helped the matter amazingly. I began to keep step myself - three hundred thousand more. - It was very natural to answer the President's call - we are coming - and to prefix the term *father*. Then the line would follow

'We are coming, Father Abraham,'

and nothing was more natural than the number of soldiers wanted.

*'Three hundred thousand more.'
'We are coming, Father Abraham
Three hundred thousand more.'*

"Where from? *Shore* is the rhyme wanted." Just then Mr. Gibbons met a Western regiment - from Minnesota, it was - and the line came at once in full,

'From Mississippi's winding stream, and from New England's shore.'

Two lines in full ... Then followed - how naturally!

*'We leave our plows and workshops, our wives and children dear,
'With hearts too full for utterance, with but a silent tear.'*

___ And so it went on, word by word, line by line, until the whole song was made. When it was written, only one slight verbal alteration was made, and then it was printed in the "Evening Post" of July 16th, 1862. It is interesting to note that it was in the "Evening Post" of May 29th, 1819, nearly half a century before, that another famous patriotic poem had first been published - Drake's "American Flag." Mr. Gibbons's song appeared anonymously, and its authorship was ascribed at once to Bryant, who was then

the editor of the "Evening Post." At a large meeting in Boston, held the evening after it had appeared, it was read by Josiah Quincy as "the latest poem written by Mr. Wm. C. Bryant."

One of the Hutchinson family set it to music, and they sang it with great effect. A common friend told Jesse Hutchinson that the song was not by Bryant but by Mr. Gibbons. "*What - our old friend Gibbons?*" he asked in reply. It is said that when assured that his old friend Gibbons was the real author of the song, Jesse Hutchinson hesitated thoughtfully for a moment and then said, "*Well, we'll keep the name of Bryant as we've got it. He's better known than Gibbons.*" The stirring song was set to music by several other composers, most of whom probably supposed that it was Bryant's. I find in a stray newspaper cutting an account of Lincoln's coming down to the Red Room of the White House one morning in the summer of 1864, to listen with bowed head and patient pensive eyes while one of a party of visitors sang

"We are coming, Father Abraham, three hundred thousand more."

A rattling good war song which has kept its hold on the ears of the people is "When Johnny comes Marching Home," written in 1863 by "Louis Lambert." Behind this pseudonym was hidden Mr. P. S. Gilmore, the projector of the Boston "Peace Jubilee," and the composer afterward of a more ambitious national hymn, which has hitherto failed to attain the popularity of its unpretending predecessor with the rousing refrain. It is related that after the performance of "Glory to God on High," from Mozart's Twelfth Mass, on the first day of the Jubilee, an old soldier of the Webster regiment took occasion to shake hands with Mr. Gilmore and to proffer his congratulations on the success of the undertaking, adding that for his part what he had liked best was the piece called the "Twelfth Massachusetts."

At the Boston Peace Jubilee, and again at the Centennial Exhibition, there was opportunity for the adequate and serious treatment of the war tunes which have survived the welter and turmoil of the actual strife; but the occasion was not improved. Little more has been done than a chance arrangement of airs in the clap-trap manner of Jullien's "British Army Quadrilles." The "Centennial March" which Richard Wagner wrote for us was the work of a master, no doubt, but it was perfunctory, and hopelessly inferior to his resplendent "Kaiser March." The German composer had not touch of the American people, and as he did not know what was in our hearts, we had no right to hope that he should give it expression. The time is now ripe for the musician who shall richly and amply develop, with sustained and sonorous dignity, the few simple airs which represent and recall to the people of these United States the emotions, the doubts, the dangers, the joys, the sorrows, the harassing anxieties, and the final triumph of the four long years of bitter strife. The composer who will take "John Brown's Body" and "Marching through Georgia," and such other of our war tunes as may be found worthy, and who shall do unto them as the still living Hungarian and Scandinavian composers have done to the folk-songs of their native land, need not hesitate from poverty of material or from fear of the lack of a responsive audience. The first American composer who shall turn these war tunes into mighty music to commemorate the events which called them forth, will of a certainty have his reward.

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