

**THE COMPOSER OF
THE BATTLE HYMN
OF THE REPUBLIC**

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The composer of the Battle hymn of the Republic by John J. MacIntyre

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ITH THE PASSING of Thomas Brigham Bishop, composer of the music of the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," the last of America's glorious coterie of minstrels joined the shades of the immortals.

His songs are known by scores of millions of people in the United States. In fact, there is scarcely an English-speaking person anywhere who does not know at least one of his songs.

Now American minstrelsy, which gave to the United States a great many of its national and folk songs, is dead, and in its place we have a school of authors who write music of the Ethiopian or

Asiatic type—Oriental seeming too high-sounding a name for it.

The good old songs remain with us, and always will, but we are not adding to them, not by so much as one in a decade.

In the last quarter of a century we have had a number of songs worthy of immortality, but nearly all of them have been squeezed into oblivion by the senseless effusions of the new school of writers.

We get few songs of homely charm or endearing sentiment nowadays. The words of most modern compositions are an insult to the intelligence. They cannot stand alone—to be read by themselves. Many of them, when they are not silly, are offensive. "Any kind of words will do so long as the music catches on," is the motto of the present-day composer.

Now we have no great musical combination like Edward Harrigan, Tony Hart and Dave Braham to

write the kind of songs the world likes to sing and remember.

One thing is true about our modern *popular* songs—they are not American in either words or music. In fact these ragtime abominations do not reflect any nationality. Some of them sound clever at first, but they soon grate upon the ear and are finally put aside—to make room for others of their kind.

Over twenty years ago I started a magazine, "The Song-Writer," in the heart of the New York theatrical district of that period, 29th Street and Broadway, with the hope of improving the songs of the day, but after two years of enjoyable and not entirely fruitless effort, I gave it up as a hopeless task. During those two years I met nearly everybody worth knowing in the realm of song, and I can look back upon the time with many pleasant memories.

"The Song-Writer" appeared just about the time that American

minstrelsy was dying out. Many of the old-timers were still laying their offerings before the shrine of inspiration, but their clean songs of love and sentiment were being crowded out by the jerky jumble which still persists with us, and which lacks sincerity, depth, and sympathetic expression.

Through my little magazine I met Thomas Brigham Bishop, perhaps the greatest of all American song-writers, unless we except Stephen C. Foster, who was his intimate friend. Bishop had seen some of my verses and wanted permission to set them to music and so he hunted me up to obtain it. I was only too willing to have my name coupled with his on a musical composition.

Some months later, while I was editing my new magazine, "Music, Song and Story," he spent a day with me in my office at 80 Fifth Avenue, New York, and among other things told me how he came

to write the song, "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah," the music of which is now immortalized in Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The story is a very interesting one, giving as it does the true origin and progress of this song which so wonderfully combines the martial and religious in music and has so intimately become part of America's national history.

"The melody, as far as I can find out, was original with me," said Mr. Bishop, "and the line which suggested it was spoken to me upon my return from St. Louis in '58 by a brother-in-law of mine, a Mr. Johnson, who had experienced religion. He took me to task for the general character of my writings, remarking that my songs were all written for the devil. Then he exclaimed:

"I am bound to be a soldier in the army of the Lord; glory, glory, hallelujah!"
