LOUIS BANKS

IMMORTAL SONGS OF CAMP AND FIELD

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Immortal Songs of Camp and Field / The Story of their Inspiration together with Striking Anecdotes connected with their History:

Содержание

THE AMERICAN FLAG	4
ADAMS AND LIBERTY	11
YANKEE DOODLE	19
THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER	26
HAIL COLUMBIA	34
COLUMBIA, THE GEM OF THE OCEAN	40
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	44

Louis Albert Banks Immortal Songs of Camp and Field / The Story of their Inspiration together with Striking Anecdotes connected with their History

THE AMERICAN FLAG

When Freedom, from her mountain height,
Unfurled her standard to the air,
She tore the azure robe of night,
And set the stars of glory there!
She mingled with its gorgeous dyes
The milky baldric of the skies,
And striped its pure celestial white
With streakings of the morning light;
Then, from his mansion in the sun,
She called her eagle bearer down,
And gave into his mighty hand
The symbol of her chosen land!

Majestic monarch of the cloud!
Who rear'st aloft thy regal form,
To hear the tempest trumpings loud,
And see the lightning-lances driven,
When stride the warriors of the storm
And rolls the thunder-drum of heaven!
Child of the sun! To thee 'tis given
To guard the banner of the free,
To hover in the sulphur smoke,
To ward away the battle stroke,
And bid its blendings shine afar
Like rainbows on the cloud of war,
The harbingers of Victory.

Flag of the brave! Thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high!
When speaks the signal trumpet tone
And the long line comes gleaming on
(Ere yet the life-blood warm and wet
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet),
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn
To where thy sky-born glories burn,
And, as his springing steps advance,
Catch war and vengeance from the glance.
And when the cannon mouthing cloud
Heaves in wild wreaths the battle shroud,
And gory sabres rise and fall,
Like shoots of flame on midnight's pall;

There shall thy meteor-glances glow,
And cowering foes shall shrink beneath
Each gallant arm that strikes below
That lovely messenger of death.

Flag of the seas! On ocean wave
Thy stars shall glitter o'er the brave;
When death, careering on the gale,
Sweeps darkly round the bellied sail,
And frighted waves rush wildly back
Before the broadside's reeling rack,
Each dying wanderer of the sea
Shall look at once to heaven and thee,
And smile to see thy splendors fly
In triumph o'er his closing eye.

Flag of the free heart's hope and home,
By angel hands to valor given;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome
And all thy hues were born in heaven!
As fixed as yonder orb divine,
That saw thy bannered blaze unfurled,
Shall thy proud stars resplendent shine,
The guard and glory of the world.

– Joseph Rodman Drake.

The author of *The American Flag* was born to poverty, but by hard work he obtained a good education, and studied medicine under Dr. Nicholas Romayne, by whom he was greatly beloved.

He obtained his degree and shortly afterward, in October, 1816, he was married to Sarah Eckford, who brought him a good deal of wealth. Two years later, his health failing, he visited New Orleans for the winter, hoping for its recovery. He returned to New York in the spring, only to die in the following autumn, September, 1820, at the age of twenty-five. He is buried at Hunt's Point, in Westchester County, New York, where he spent some of the years of his boyhood. On his monument are these lines, written by his friend, Fitz-Green Halleck, —

> "None knew him but to love him,
> Nor named him but to praise."

Drake was a poet from his childhood. The anecdotes preserved of his early youth show the fertility of his imagination. His first rhymes were a conundrum which he perpetrated when he was but five years old. He was one day, for some childish offense, punished by imprisonment in a portion of the garret shut off by some wooden bars. His sisters stole up to witness his suffering condition, and found him pacing the room, with something like a sword on his shoulder, watching an incongruous heap on the floor, in the character of Don Quixote at his vigils over the armor in the church. He called a boy of his acquaintance, named Oscar, "Little Fingal;" his ideas from books thus early seeking embodiment in living shapes. In the same spirit the child listened with great delight to the stories of an old neighbor lady

about the Revolution. He would identify himself with the scene, and once, when he had given her a very energetic account of a ballad which he had read, upon her remarking that it was a tough story, he quickly replied, with a deep sigh: "Ah! we had it tough enough that day, ma'am."

Drake wrote *The Mocking-Bird*, one of his poems which has lived and will live, when a mere boy. It shows not only a happy facility but an unusual knowledge of the imitative faculty in the young poets of his time.

The American Flag was written in May, 1819, when the author was not quite twenty-four. It has remained unchanged except the last four lines. It originally concluded: —

> "As fixed as yonder orb divine,
> That saw thy bannered blaze unfurled,
> Shall thy proud stars resplendent shine,
> The guard and glory of the world."

These lines were very unsatisfactory to Drake, and he said to Fitz-Green Halleck, "Fitz, can't you suggest a better stanza?" Whereupon the brilliant author of *Marco Bozzaris* sat down and wrote in a glowing burst of inspiration the four concluding lines: —

> "Forever float that standard sheet!
> Where breathes the foe but falls before us?
> With Freedom's soil beneath our feet,

And Freedom's banner streaming o'er us?"

Drake immediately agreed that these were a splendid improvement on the former ending, and incorporated them into his one poem that is certain of immortality. It was first published in the New York *Evening Post*, in a series known as the *Croaker Pieces*, *The American Flag* being the last one of the series.

The young poet was entirely free from vanity and affectation, and had no morbid seeking for popular applause. When he was on his deathbed, at his wife's request, Doctor DeKay collected and copied all his poems which could be found and took them to him. "See, Joe," said he to him, "what I have done." "Burn them," he replied; "they are valueless."

Drake's impulsive nature, as well as the spirit and force, yet simplicity, of expression, with his artless manner, gained him many friends. He had that native politeness which springs from benevolence – that would stop to pick up the hat or the crutch of an old servant, or fly to the relief of a child. His acquaintance with Fitz-Green Halleck arose in a romantic incident on the Battery one day when, in a retiring shower, the heavens were spanned by a rainbow. DeKay and Drake were together, and Halleck, a new acquaintance, was talking with them; the conversation taking the turn of some passing expression of the wishes of the moment, Halleck whimsically remarked that it would be heaven for him, just then, to ride on that rainbow and read Campbell. The idea was very pleasing to

Drake. He seized Halleck by the hand and from that moment until his untimely death they were bosom friends.

ADAMS AND LIBERTY

Ye sons of Columbia, who bravely have fought
For those rights which unstain'd from your sires had descended,
May you long taste the blessings your valor has bought,
And your sons reap the soil which your fathers defended!
'Mid the reign of mild peace,
May your nation increase,
With the glory of Rome, and the wisdom of Greece.
And ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

In a clime whose rich vales feed the marts of the world,
Whose shores are unshaken by Europe's commotion,
The trident of Commerce should never be hurl'd
To increase the legitimate powers of the ocean.
But should pirates invade,
Though in thunder array'd,
Let your cannon declare the free charter of trade;
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

The fame of our arms, of our laws the mild sway,
Had justly ennobled our nation in story,
Till the dark clouds of faction obscured our young day,

And enveloped the sun of American glory.
But let traitors be told,
Who their country have sold,
And bartered their God for his image in gold,
That ne'er will the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

While France her huge limbs bathes recumbent in blood,
And society's base threats with wide dissolution;
May peace, like the dove who return'd from the flood,
Find an ark of abode in our mild constitution.
But, though peace is our aim,
Yet the boon we disclaim,
If bought by our sovereignty, justice, or fame;
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

'Tis the fire of the flint each American warms:
Let Rome's haughty victors beware of collision;
Let them bring all the vassals of Europe in arms,
We're a world by ourselves, and disdain a provision.
While with patriot pride
To our laws we're allied,
No foe can subdue us, no faction divide;
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Our mountains are crown'd with imperial oak,
Whose roots, like our liberties, ages have nourish'd;

But long ere our nation submits to the yoke,
Not a tree shall be left on the field where it flourish'd.
Should invasion impend,
Every grove would descend
From the hilltops they shaded our shores to defend;
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Let our patriots destroy Anarch's pestilent worm,
Lest our liberty's growth should be check'd by corrosion;
Then let clouds thicken round us: we heed not the storm;
Our realm fears no shock, but the earth's own explosion.
Foes assail us in vain,
Though their fleets bridge the main,
For our altars and laws with our lives we'll maintain;
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Should the tempest of war overshadow our land,
Its bolts could ne'er rend Freedom's temple asunder;
For, unmov'd, at its portal would Washington stand,
And repulse with his breast the assaults of the thunder!
His sword from the sleep
Of its scabbard would leap,
And conduct, with its point, every flash to the deep;
For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

Let Fame to the world sound America's voice;

No intrigues can her sons from their government sever:
Her pride is her Adams, their laws are his choice,
And shall flourish till Liberty slumbers forever.
Then unite heart and hand,
Like Leonidas' band,
And swear to the God of the ocean and land,
That ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves.

– Robert Treat Paine.

The father of the author of *Adams and Liberty*, or as it has been more usually entitled in later days, *Ye Sons of Columbia*, was the Robert Treat Paine who was one of the immortal signers of the Declaration of Independence. The author of this hymn was given by his parents the name of Thomas, but on account of that being the name of a notorious infidel of his time, he appealed to the legislature of Massachusetts to give him a *Christian* name; thereafter he took the name of his father, Robert Treat Paine.

He was a very precocious and brilliant youth. When he was seven years of age his family removed from Taunton, where he was born, to Boston, and there he prepared for Harvard College at one of the public schools, entering the freshman class in his fifteenth year. One of his classmates wrote a squib on him in verse on the college wall, and Paine, on consultation with his friends, being advised to retaliate in kind, did so, and thus became aware of the poetic faculty of which he afterward made such liberal use. He wrote nearly all his college compositions

in verse, with such success that he was assigned the post of poet at the College Exhibition in the autumn of 1791, and at the Commencement in the following year. After receiving his diploma, he entered the counting-room of Mr. James Tisdale, but soon proved that his tastes did not lie in that direction. He would often be carried away by day-dreams and make entries in his day-book in poetry. On one occasion when he was sent to the bank with a check for five hundred dollars, he met some literary acquaintances on the way and went off with them to Cambridge, and spent a week in the enjoyment of "the feast of reason and the flow of soul," returning to his duties with the cash at the end of that period.

In 1792 young Paine fell deeply in love with an actress, a Miss Baker, aged sixteen, who was one of the first players to appear in Boston. Their performances were at first called dramatic recitations to avoid a collision with a law forbidding "stage plays." He married Miss Baker in 1794, and was promptly turned out of doors by his father.

The next year, on taking his degree of A.M. at Cambridge, he delivered a poem entitled *The Invention of Letters*. There was a great deal of excitement over this poem at the time, as it contained some lines referring to Jacobinism, which the college authorities crossed out, but which he delivered as written. The poem was greatly admired, and Washington wrote him a letter in appreciation of its merits. It was immediately published and large editions sold, the author receiving fifteen hundred dollars

as his share of the profits, which was no doubt a very grateful return to a poet with a young wife and an obdurate father. The breach with his family, however, was afterward healed.

Mr. Paine was also the author of a poem entitled *The Ruling Passion*, for which he received twelve hundred dollars. Still another famous poem of his was called *The Steeds of Apollo*.

In 1794 he produced his earliest ode, *Rise, Columbia*, which, perhaps, was the seed thought from which later sprang the more extended hymn, —

> "When first the sun o'er ocean glow'd
> And earth unveil'd her virgin breast,
> Supreme 'mid Nature's vast abode
> Was heard th' Almighty's dread behest:
> 'Rise, Columbia, brave and free,
> Poise the globe, and bound the sea.'"

His most famous song, *Adams and Liberty*, – which is sung to the same tune as Key's *Star-Spangled Banner*, or *Anacreon in Heaven*, – was written four years later at the request of the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society. Its sale yielded him a profit of more than seven hundred and fifty dollars. These receipts show an immediate popularity which has seldom been achieved by patriotic songs. In 1799 he delivered an oration on the first anniversary of the dissolution of the alliance with France which was a great oratorical triumph. The author sent a copy, after its publication, to Washington, and received a reply in which

the General says: "You will be assured that I am never more gratified than when I see the effusions of genius from some of the rising generation, which promises to secure our national rank in the literary world; as I trust their firm, manly, and patriotic conduct will ever maintain it with dignity in the political."

The next to the last stanza of *Adams and Liberty* was not in the song as originally written. Paine was dining with Major Benjamin Russell, when he was reminded that his song had made no mention of Washington. The host said he could not fill his glass until the error had been corrected, whereupon the author, after a moment's thinking, scratched off the lines which pay such a graceful tribute to the First American: —

> "Should the tempest of war overshadow our land,
> Its bolts could ne'er rend Freedom's temple asunder;
> For, unmov'd, at its portal would Washington stand,
> And repulse with his breast the assaults of the thunder!
> His sword from the sleep
> Of its scabbard would leap,
> And conduct, with its point, every flash to the deep;
> For ne'er shall the sons of Columbia be slaves,
> While the earth bears a plant, or the sea rolls its waves."

Instead of being added to the hymn it was inserted as it here appears. The second, fourth, and fifth stanzas have been usually omitted in recent publications of the hymn.

The brilliant genius of Paine was sadly eclipsed by strong

drink, that dire foe of many men of bright literary promise. His sun, which had risen so proudly, found an untimely setting about the beginning of the war of 1812.

YANKEE DOODLE

Father and I went down to camp
Along with Captain Gooding,
And there we saw the men and boys,
As thick as hasty pudding.
Yankee Doodle, keep it up,
Yankee Doodle Dandy!
Mind the music and the step,
And with the gals be handy!

And there we see a thousand men
As rich as Squire David,
And what they wasted every day, —
I wish it had been savèd.

The 'lasses they eat up every day
Would keep our house all winter, —
They have so much that I'll be bound
They eat whene'er they've a mind to.

And there we see a whopping gun,
As big as a log of maple,
Mounted on a little cart, —
A load for father's cattle.

And every time they fired it off
It took a horn of powder,
And made a noise like father's gun,
Only a nation louder.

I went as near to it
As 'Siah's underpinning;
Father went as nigh agin, —
I thought the devil was in him.

Cousin Simon grew so bold,
I thought he meant to cock it;
He scared me so, I streaked it off,
And hung to father's pocket.

And Captain Davis had a gun
He kind o' clapped his hand on,
And stuck a crooked stabbing-iron
Upon the little end on 't.

And there I saw a pumpkin shell
As big as mother's basin;
And every time they sent one off,
They scampered like tarnation.

I saw a little bar'el, too,
Its heads were made of leather;
They knocked on it with little plugs,
To call the folks together.

And there was Captain Washington,
With grand folks all about him;
They says he's grown so tarnal proud,
He cannot ride without them.

He had on his meeting-clothes,
And rode a slapping stallion,
And gave his orders to the men, —
I guess there was a million.

And then the feathers in his hat,
They were so tarnal fine-ah,
I wanted peskily to get
To hand to my Jemima.

And then they'd fife away like fun
And play on cornstalk fiddles;
And some had ribbons red as blood
All wound about their middles.

The troopers, too, would gallop up,
And fire right in our faces;
It scared me a'most to death
To see them run such races.

And then I saw a snarl of men
A-digging graves, they told me,
So tarnal long, so tarnal deep, —

They allowed they were to hold me.

It scared me so I hooked it off,
Nor stopped as I remember,
Nor turned about, till I got home,
Locked up in mother's chamber.

It is certainly the tune of *Yankee Doodle*, and not the words of this old song, which captured the fancy of the country and held its sway in America for nearly a hundred and fifty years.

The tune, however, is much older than that. It has been claimed in many lands. When Kossuth was in this country making his plea for liberty for Hungary, he informed a writer of the Boston *Post* that, when the Hungarians that accompanied him first heard *Yankee Doodle* on a Mississippi River steamer, they immediately recognized it as one of the old national airs of their native land, one played in the dances of that country, and they began to caper and dance as they had been accustomed to do in Hungary.

It has been claimed also in Holland as an old harvest song. It is said that when the laborers received for wages "as much buttermilk as they could drink, and a tenth of the grain," they used to sing as they reaped, to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*, the words, —

"Yanker, didel, doodle down,
Diddle, dudel, lanther,

Yanke viver, voover vown,
Botermilk und tanther."

From Spain, also, comes a claim. The American Secretary of Legation, Mr. Buckingham Smith, wrote from Madrid under date of June 3, 1858: "The tune of *Yankee Doodle*, from the first of my showing it here, has been acknowledged, by persons acquainted with music, to bear a strong resemblance to the popular airs of Biscay; and yesterday, a professor from the north recognized it as being much like the ancient sword-dance played on solemn occasions by the people of San Sebastian. He says the tune varies in those provinces. The first strains are identically those of the heroic Danza Esparta of brave old Biscay."

France puts in a claim, and declares that *Yankee Doodle* is an old vintage song from the southern part of that land of grapes; while Italy, too, claims *Yankee Doodle* for her own.

The probabilities are that it was introduced into England from Holland.

Yankee Doodle became an American institution in June, 1755. General Braddock, of melancholy fate, was gathering the colonists to an encampment near Albany for an attack on the French and Indians at Niagara. The countrymen came into camp in a medley of costumes, from the buckskins and furs of the American Indian to some quaint old-fashioned military heirloom of a century past. The British soldiers made great sport of their ragged clothes and the quaint music to which they marched.

There was among these regular troops from England a certain Dr. Richard Shuckburg, who could not only patch up human bodies, but had a great facility in patching up tunes as well. As these grotesque countrymen marched into camp, this quick-witted doctor recalled the old air which was sung by the cavaliers in ridicule of Cromwell, who was said to have ridden into Oxford on a small horse with his single plume fastened into a sort of knot which was derisively called a "macaroni." The words were, —

> "Yankee Doodle came to town,
> Upon a Kentish pony;
> He stuck a feather in his cap,
> Upon a macaroni."

Doctor Shuckburg at once began to plan a joke upon the uncouth newcomers. He set down the notes of *Yankee Doodle*, wrote along with them the lively travesty upon Cromwell, and gave them to the militia musicians as the latest martial music of England. The band quickly caught the simple and contagious air which would play itself, and in a few hours it was sounding through the camp amid the laughter of the British soldiers. It was a very prophetic piece of fun, however, which became significant a few years later. When the battles of Concord and Lexington began the Revolutionary War, the English, when proudly advancing, played along the road *God save the King*; but after they had been routed, and were making their disastrous retreat, the Americans followed them with the taunting *Yankee*

Doodle.

It was only twenty-five years after Doctor Shuckburg's joke when Lord Cornwallis marched into the lines of these same old ragged Continentals to surrender his army and his sword to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*.

Francis Hopkinson, of Philadelphia, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and the father of Joseph Hopkinson, the author of *Hail Columbia*, adapted the words of his famous song *The Battle of the Kegs*, to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*. David Bushnell, the inventor of the torpedo, in December, 1777, had set adrift at night a large number of kegs charged with gunpowder, which were designed to explode on coming in contact with the British vessels in the Delaware. They failed in their object, but, exploding in the vicinity, created intense alarm in the fleet, which kept up for hours a continuous discharge of cannon and small arms at every object in the river. This was "the battle of the kegs."

Verses without number have been sung to the tune of *Yankee Doodle*, but the ballad given here is the one that was best known and most frequently sung during the war for independence. They are said to have been written by a gentleman of Connecticut whose name has not survived. The exact date of their first publication is not known, but as these verses were sung at the Battle of Bunker Hill it must have been as early as 1775.

THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER

O say, can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming?
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming!
And the rocket's red glare,
The bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On that shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
As it fitfully blows now conceals, now discloses?
Now it catches the gleam
Of the morning's first beam,
In full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
A home and a country should leave us no more?

Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollution.
No refuge could save
The hireling and slave
From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave;
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand
Between their loved homes and the war's desolation!
Blessed with victory and peace, may the heaven-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must,
When our cause it is just,
And this be our motto – "In God is our trust:"
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

– Francis Scott Key.

No song could have had a more inspiring source of creation than did this. Its author, Mr. Francis Scott Key, was a young lawyer who left Baltimore in September, 1814, while the war of 1812 was yet going on, and under a flag of truce visited the British fleet for the purpose of obtaining the release of a friend of his, a certain Doctor Beanes, who had been captured at Marlborough. After his arrival at the fleet he was compelled to remain with it during the bombardment of Fort McHenry, as the officers were afraid to permit him to land lest he should disclose the purposes of the British. Mr. Key remained on deck

all night, watching every shell from the moment it was fired until it fell, and listening with breathless interest to hear if an explosion followed. The firing suddenly ceased before day, but from the position of the ship he could not discover whether the fort had surrendered or the attack had been abandoned. He paced the deck for the remainder of the night in painful suspense, watching with intense anxiety for the return of day, and looking every few minutes at his watch to see how long he must wait for it; and as soon as it dawned, and before it was light enough to see objects at a distance, his glass was turned to the fort, uncertain whether he should see there the Stars and Stripes or the flag of the enemy. At length the light came, and he saw that "our flag was still there;" and as the day advanced he discovered from the movement of the boats between the shore and the fleet that the English troops had been defeated, and that many wounded men were being carried to the ships. At length Mr. Key was informed that the attack on Baltimore had failed, and he with his friend was permitted to return home, while the hostile fleet sailed away, leaving the Star-Spangled Banner still waving from Fort McHenry.

During the intense anxiety of waiting for dawn, Mr. Key had conceived the idea of the song and had written some lines, or brief notes that would aid him in calling them to mind, upon the back of a letter which he happened to have in his pocket. He finished the poem in the boat on his way to the shore, and finally corrected it, leaving it as it now stands, at the hotel, on the night he reached Baltimore, and immediately after he arrived. The

next morning he took it to Judge Nicholson, the chief justice of Maryland, to ask him what he thought of it; and he was so pleased with it that he immediately sent it to the printer, Benjamin Edes, and directed copies to be struck off in handbill form. In less than an hour after it was placed in the hands of the printer it was all over the town, and hailed with enthusiasm, and at once took its place in the national songs. The first newspaper that printed it was the *American*, of Baltimore.

The tune, which has helped so much to make it famous, also had an interesting selection. Two brothers, Charles and Ferdinand Durang, were actors at the Holliday Street Theater in Baltimore, but were also soldiers. A copy of Francis Key's poem came to them in camp; it was read aloud to a company of the soldiers, among whom were the Durang brothers. All were inspired by the pathetic eloquence of the song and Ferdinand Durang at once put his wits to work to find a tune for it. Hunting up a volume of flute music which was in one of the tents, he impatiently whistled snatches of tune after tune, just as they caught his quick eye. One, called *Anacreon in Heaven*, struck his fancy and riveted his attention. Note after note fell from his puckered lips until, with a leap and shout, he exclaimed, "Boys, I've hit it!" And fitting the tune to the words, there rang out for the first time the song of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. How the men shouted and clapped; for there never was a wedding of poetry to music made under more inspiring influences! Getting a brief furlough, the Durang brothers sang it in public soon after.

It was caught up in the camps, and sung around the bivouac fires, and whistled in the streets, and when peace was declared, and the soldiers went back to their homes, they carried this song in their hearts as the most precious souvenir of the war of 1812.

The song bears evidence of the special incident to which it owes its creation, and is not suited to all times and occasions on that account. To supply this want, additional stanzas have, from time to time, been written. Perhaps the most notable of all these is the following stanza, which was written by Oliver Wendell Holmes, at the request of a lady, during our civil war, there being no verse alluding to treasonable attempts against the flag. It was originally printed in the Boston *Evening Transcript*.

> "When our land is illumined with liberty's smile,
> If a foe from within strike a blow at her glory,
> Down, down with the traitor who dares to defile
> The flag of her stars and the page of her story!
> By the millions unchained
> Who their birthright have gained
> We will keep her bright blazon forever unstained;
> And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
> While the land of the free is the home of the brave."

The air selected under such interesting circumstances as we have described —*Anacreon in Heaven*, – is that of an old English song. In the second half of the eighteenth century a jovial society, called the "Anacreontic," held its festive and musical

meetings at the "Crown and Anchor" in the Strand. It is now the "Whittington Club;" but in the last century it was frequented by Doctor Johnson, Boswell, Sir Joshua Reynolds and others. One Ralph Tomlinson, Esq., was at that time president of the Anacreontic Society, and wrote the words of the song adopted by the club, and John Stafford Smith set them to music, it is claimed to an old French air. The song was published by the composer, and was sold at his house, 7 Warwick Street, Spring Garden, London, between the years 1770-75. Thus the source of the music so long identified with this inspiring song is swallowed up in the mystery of the name of Smith.

The flag of Fort McHenry, which inspired the song, still exists in a fair state of preservation. It is at this time thirty-two feet long and of twenty-nine feet hoist. In its original dimensions it was probably forty feet long; the shells of the enemy, and the work of curiosity hunters, have combined to decrease its length. Its great width is due to its having fifteen instead of thirteen stripes, each nearly two feet wide. It has, or rather had, fifteen five-pointed stars, each two feet from point to point, and arranged in five indented parallel lines, three stars in each horizontal line. The Union rests in the ninth, which is a red stripe, instead of the eighth, a white stripe, as in our present flag. There can be no doubt as to the authenticity of this flag. It was preserved by Colonel Armstead, and bears upon its stripes, in his autograph, his name and the date of the bombardment. It has always remained in his family and in 1861 his widow bequeathed

it to their youngest daughter, Mrs. William Stuart Appleton, who, some time after the bombardment, was born in Fort McHenry under its folds. She was named Georgians Armstead for her father, and the precious flag was hoisted on its staff in honor of her birth. Mrs. Appleton died in New York, July 25, 1878, and bequeathed the flag to her son, Mr. Eben Appleton, of Yonkers, New York, who now holds it.

The Star-Spangled Banner has come out of the Spanish War baptized with imperishable glory. Throughout the war it has been above all others, in camp or on the battlefield, the song that has aroused the highest enthusiasm. During the bombardment of Manila the band on a British cruiser, lying near the American fleet, played *The Star-Spangled Banner*, thus showing in an unmistakable way their sympathy with the American cause. In the trenches before Santiago it was sung again and again by our soldiers and helped, more than anything else, to inspire them to deeds of heroic valor. Once when the army moved forward in the charge, the man who played the E-flat horn in the band left his place and rushed forward with the soldiers in the attacking column. Of course the band's place is in the rear. But this man, unmindful of everything, broke away and went far up the hill with the charge, carrying his horn over his shoulder, slung with a strap. For a time he went along unobserved, until one of the officers happened to see him. And he said to him, "What are you doing here? You can't do anything; you can't fight; you haven't any gun or sword. This is no place for you. Get down behind

that rock." The soldier fell back for a minute, half dazed, and feeling the pull of the strap on his shoulder cried out in agony: "I can't do anything, I can't fight." And so he got down behind the rock. But almost instantly he raised his horn and began to play *The Star-Spangled Banner*. They heard him down in the valley, and immediately the band took it up, and in the midst of those inspiring strains the army charged to victory.

HAIL COLUMBIA

Hail, Columbia! happy land!
Hail, ye heroes! heaven-born band!
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
Who fought and bled in Freedom's cause,
And when the storm of war was gone,
Enjoy'd the peace your valor won.
Let independence be our boast,
Ever mindful what it cost;
Ever grateful for the prize,
Let its altars reach the skies.
Firm, united, let us be,
Rallying round our Liberty;
As a band of brothers join'd,
Peace and safety we shall find.

Immortal patriots! rise once more:
Defend your rights, defend your shore:
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Let no rude foe, with impious hand,
Invade the shrine where sacred lies
Of toil and blood the well-earn'd prize.
While offering peace sincere and just,
In Heaven we place a manly trust,
That truth and justice will prevail,

And every scheme of bondage fail.

Sound, sound, the trump of Fame!
Let WASHINGTON'S great name
Ring through the world with loud applause,
Ring through the world with loud applause;
Let every clime to Freedom dear,
Listen with a joyful ear.
With equal skill, and Godlike power,
He govern'd in the fearful hour
Of horrid war; or guides with ease,
The happier times of honest peace.

Behold the chief who now commands,
Once more to serve his country stands,
The rock on which the storm will beat;
The rock on which the storm will beat.
But, arm'd in virtue firm and true,
His hopes are fix'd on Heaven and you.
When hope was sinking in dismay,
And glooms obscured Columbia's day,
His steady mind, from changes free,
Resolved on death or liberty.

– Joseph Hopkinson.

Joseph Hopkinson, like Francis Scott Key, the author of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, was also a lawyer. He commenced the practice of law in Easton, Pennsylvania, but soon removed to Philadelphia, where he acquired high distinction at the bar.

He was four years a member of Congress, and was afterward appointed judge of the United States District Court, an office held by his grandfather under the British Crown before the Revolutionary War, and to which his father had been chosen on the organization of the United States Judiciary in 1789. He retained this office until his death in 1842.

Mr. Hopkinson was still a young man, only twenty-eight years of age, when he wrote the song which will make his name honored as long as American liberty is remembered. It was in the summer of 1798, when a war with France was thought to be inevitable. Congress was in session in Philadelphia, discussing the advisability of a declaration of war, and many acts of hostility had actually occurred. England and France were at war already, and the people of the United States were divided into factions for the one side or the other. One party argued that policy and duty required Americans to take part with republican France; the other section urged the wisdom of connecting ourselves with England, under the belief that she was the great conservator of modern civilization, and that her triumph meant the rule of good principles and safe government. Both belligerents had been careless of our rights, and seemed to be forcing us from the just and wise policy of Washington, which was to maintain a strict and impartial neutrality between them. The prospect of a rupture with France was exceedingly offensive to that portion of the people who hoped for her success, and the violence of party spirit ran to the highest extreme.

Just at this time a young singer who was very popular in Philadelphia was to be given a benefit at one of the theaters. This young man was a school friend of Joseph Hopkinson. They had kept up their acquaintance after their school-days had passed, and one Saturday afternoon he called on Hopkinson to talk over with him his benefit which was announced for the following Monday. He said he had every prospect of suffering a loss instead of receiving a benefit from the performance; but that if he could get a patriotic song adapted to the tune of the *President's March*, then the popular air, he would no doubt have a full house. The poor fellow was almost in despair about it, as the poets of the theatrical corps had been trying to accomplish it, and had come to the conclusion that no words could be composed to suit the music of that march. The young lawyer told his friend that he would try what he could do for him. He came the next afternoon, and the song, *Hail Columbia*, was ready for him. It was announced on Monday morning, and the theater was crowded to overflowing, and so continued, night after night, for the rest of the season. The excitement about it grew so great that the song was not only encored but had to be repeated many times each night, the audience joining in the chorus. It was also sung at night in the streets by large crowds of citizens, which often included members of Congress and other distinguished public officials. The enthusiasm spread to other cities and the song was caught up and reëchoed at all kinds of public gatherings throughout the United States.

The object of Mr. Hopkinson in writing the song, in addition to doing a kind deed for his friend and schoolmate, was to arouse an American spirit which should be independent of and above the interests, passions, and policy of both belligerents, and look and feel exclusively for our own honor and rights. For this reason no allusion was made to France or England, or to the war which was raging between them, or to our indignation as to their treatment of us. It was this prudence which gave the song its universal popularity. It found equal favor with both parties, for neither could disown the loyal sentiments it inculcated. It was so purely American, and nothing else, that the patriotic feelings of every American heart responded to it.

The *President's March*, for which the poem was specially written and to which it was easily adapted, was composed in honor of President Washington, who then resided at 190 High Street, Philadelphia. The composer of the popular air was Philip Roth, a teacher of music. Not a great deal is left on record about him, but it is declared that he was a very eccentric character, familiarly known as "Old Roat." It is also said that he took snuff immoderately. A claim has been set up for Professor Phyla, of Philadelphia, but the evidence favors Roth.

During the centennial year an autograph copy of *Hail Columbia* was displayed in the museum at Independence Hall, Philadelphia. This copy was written from memory, February 22, 1828, and presented to George M. Kein, Esq., of Reading, in compliance with a request made by him. This interesting

manuscript has marginal notes, one of which informs us that the lines: —

> "Behold the chief who now commands,
> Once more to serve his country stands,
> The rock on which the storm will beat;
> The rock on which the storm will beat.
> But, arm'd in virtue firm and true,
> His hopes are fix'd on Heaven and you.
> When hope was sinking in dismay,
> And glooms obscured Columbia's day,
> His steady mind, from changes free,
> Resolved on death or liberty,"

refer to John Adams, who was President of the United States at the time *Hail Columbia* was written. Mr. Hopkinson also presented General Washington with an autograph copy of his poem, and received from him a complimentary letter of thanks, which is now in possession of his descendants.

COLUMBIA, THE GEM OF THE OCEAN

O Columbia! the gem of the ocean,
The home of the brave and the free;
The shrine of each patriot's devotion,
A world offers homage to thee.
Thy mandates make heroes assemble
When Liberty's form stands in view,
Thy banners make tyranny tremble
When borne by the red, white, and blue,
When borne by the red, white, and blue,
When borne by the red, white, and blue,
Thy banners make tyranny tremble
When borne by the red, white, and blue.

When war winged its wide desolation,
And threaten'd the land to deform;
The ark then of Freedom's foundation,
Columbia, rode safe through the storm:
With her garlands of vict'ry around her,
When so proudly she bore her brave crew,
With her flag proudly floating before her,
The boast of the red, white, and blue,
The boast of the red, white, and blue,
The boast of the red, white, and blue,

With her flag proudly floating before her,
The boast of the red, white, and blue.

The winecup, the winecup bring hither,
And fill you it true to the brim;
May the wreaths they have won never wither
Nor the star of their glory grow dim.
May the service united ne'er sever,
But they to their colors prove true,
The Army and Navy forever,
Three cheers for the red, white, and blue,
Three cheers for the red, white, and blue,
Three cheers for the red, white, and blue,
The Army and Navy forever,
Three cheers for the red, white, and blue.

– Thomas à Becket.

This splendid song, as popular, perhaps, as any of America's patriotic hymns, was written in 1843 by a young actor named Thomas à Becket. He was engaged at that time at the Chestnut Street Theater, in Philadelphia. He was waited upon by a Mr. D. T. Shaw, an acquaintance, who was also an actor, with the request that he would write him a song for his benefit night. Mr. Shaw had been trying to write one for himself, but had made a sad failure of it. He produced some patriotic lines, and asked Mr. À Becket's opinion on them; he found them ungrammatical and so deficient in measure as to be totally unfit to be set to music. They went to the house of a mutual friend, and there À Becket

wrote the two first verses in pencil, and sitting down at a piano in the room of the friend's house, he composed the melody. On reaching home that evening he added the third verse, wrote the symphonies and arrangements, made a fair copy in ink, and gave it to Mr. Shaw, requesting him not to give or sell a copy to any one.

A few weeks afterward Mr. À Becket left for New Orleans, and a little while later was greatly astonished to see a published copy of his song entitled, "*Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean*, written, composed, and sung by David T. Shaw, and arranged by T. à Becket, Esq." On his return to Philadelphia he sought out Mr. Willig, the publisher, who told him he had purchased the song from Mr. Shaw. Mr. À Becket produced the original copy in pencil, and claimed the copyright, which Mr. Willig admitted, making some severe remarks upon Shaw's conduct in the affair. A week later it appeared under its proper title, "*Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean*, written and composed by T. à Becket, and sung by D. T. Shaw." The song has been often printed under the title *The Red, White, and Blue*, and is very familiarly known as "The Army and Navy Song," from being peculiarly adapted to reunions of the two wings of the military department of the government.

Mr. E. L. Davenport, an eminent actor, sung the song nightly in London for many weeks, where it became very popular. It was printed there under the title *Britannia, the Pride of the Ocean*. On this account some people have supposed the English version

to be the original, and ours merely an adaptation of it. That part of its title, "The Gem of the Ocean," belongs to the Emerald Isle, rather than to Columbia, and seems more appropriate to designate an island power like Great Britain than a continental power like the United States. However, it is beginning to look as though we might have islands of our own in abundance.

While red, white, and blue have for a long time been the ranking order of the colors of British national ensigns, with us *blue*– the blue of the union, the firmament of our constellation of stars – claims the first place on our colors, red the second, and white the third; so that for us the song should read, —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.