Old Songs and their Makers.

(By George Fortis.)

He was a wise man who said "Let me make the ballads of a nation, and I care not who makes the laws," for the singing of a song has made a president, honoured kings, caused a country to run rivers of blood, turned a populace into a howling, maddened mob, reduced a mob to a passion of tears, aided in starting revolutions, cheered armies to victory, and marked to laughter the most serious. And, after all, what can touch the chords of the human emotion like a song?

There were times when that famous hymn "La Marseillaise" transformed the people of Paris into a frenzied mob, and again to hysteria of tears and imbecile cheerfulness. When this terribly beautiful air floated across La Belle France it left a trail of blood and ruin in its wake, and it nearly proved the death-dirge of its composer, De Lisle, the young French officer.

"God Save the King," the British national anthem, has honoured the sovereigns of England for years, and the armies of both the North and South were spurred to battle during the Americnn Civil War by the stirring marching-songs, among which was Julia Ward Howe's "Battle Hymn of the Republic" that were written at the time. The American national song, "The Star-Spangled Banner," was composed in 1814, while the famous air, "Hail Columbia,,' was sung more than a century ago.

"The Old Oaken Bucket" was written in 1817, in New York, by Samuel Woodworth. One hot day Woodworth, who was employed in a printing establishment in Duane-street, returned to his house from the shop, and pouring a glass of water from a pitcher, drained it eagerly.

"That is refreshing," he said; "but how much more refreshing had it been taken from the old oaken bucket that hung in father's well!"

Woodworth's wife, who was present, suggested that the remark offered possibilities for a poem. Seizing his pen and a piece of paper, the printer began to write, and, as the scenes of his childhood arose before him, he dashed off the lines of the song that since have been familiar in every household. It was put to music by Kiallmark some time later.

Who has not lent his voice to swell the chorus of "My Old Kentucky Home," "Old Dog Tray," "Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground," "Carry Me 'Long Boys," "Old Uncle Ned,' and that hallowed melody of the South, "Swannee Ribber?" They are songs of the South, yet they were all written by a man from Pennsylvania.

"Sweet Alice Ben Bolt" is another song with which most persons are familiar. This was written in 1842, by Dr. Thomas Dunn English. It met with almost instant favour, and a large number of copies were sold in a few weeks. The music was composed by Nelson Kneass.

"Home, Sweet Home" was written by John Howard Payne, who was a New Yorker by birth, and for many years a European by residence. It was first sung in 1832, in an opera by Payne entitled "Clari; The Maid of Milan." The song was a decided success, and one hundred thousand copies were sold within a year. Payne died abroad but in 1853 his body was brought to America and buried in Washington.

"A Life on the Ocean Wave" was written by Epes Sargent, of Gloucester, Massachusetts. He says that he originally wrote the song for Henry Russell. The subject was suggested by the sight of the cluster of vessels moored in the bay, while he was walking on the Battery, in New York. He wrote out the words and then went to the office of "The Mirror," where he showed his production to George P. Morris, the editor. Morris offered to publish the verses, but said they could not be put to music.

Shortly afterward, Sargent met Russell, who asked him if he had written the song he had promised him.

"Yes.' replied Sargent, "I have tried; but fear I have failed."

Russell wanted to see the lines. Sargent produced them, and the musician sat down to the piano, let his fingers wander over the keys, and then dashed off the music.

"Black-Eyed Susan" was written by John Gray in 1725. Gray was also the author of the words of the song called "'Twas When the Seas Were Roaring," and Handel, the famous composer, put it to music.

The old song, "I'll Hang My Harp on a Willow Tree," is anonymous. Many unsuccessful attempts have been made to trace the authorship of this melody. The music was arranged by Wellington Guernsey.

"Annie Laurie" was written by William Douglas, of Scotland. Nor was the Annie Laurie of the song merely one of those fanciful creatures of a poet's mind. She was the daughter of Robert Laurie, Baronet of Maxwellton. The story goes that Douglas was deeply in love with the young woman, and that she returned his affection, but that rather than marry against her father's wishes she gave up her romantic lover and became the wife of a man named Ferguson. The music for this exquisite piece was composed by Lady John Scott.

There has been a curious dispute connected with that favourite song of children, "Coming Through the Rye." The word "rye" in the melody had always been supposed to refer to a field of grain, and even the covers of songbooks containing the selection have borne illustrations of an encounter in a rye-field. It is said by some, however, that Burns touched up an old Scottish song referring to fording the small river Rye, and that the popular conception of the song is shown to be erroneous by the old custom, in Scotland, of exacting a toll of kisses from lasses that were met crossing a stream on the stepping-stones.

The author of the song "Old King Cole" is unknown. Probably this ballad came from a tradition concerning a king named Cole, who existed in Britain in the third century. There was also a famous cloth manufacturer of Reading, England, called "Old Cole," whose nickname became proverbial through a popular story-book of the sixteenth century, and "Old Cole" was a nickname current with the dramatists of the Elizabethan age.

"John Brown's Body," that sonorous refrain which became the marching-song of the American nation during the Cviil War, was written, with the exception of the first stanza by Charles Hall of Charlestown, Massachusetts, about 1860. The composer of the music is unknown. Henry H. Brownell, of Hartford, Connecticut, also wrote a set of words to this air, which are sometimes sung.

The finest battle-song of the Confederates during the Civil War was "Maryland, My Maryland," which was written in April, 1861, by Jas. Ryder Randall, of Baltimore. Though this song was written in New Orleans, it was first published in Baltimore, and was set to the German "Burschenlied," which begins, "Oh, Tannenbaum Oh, Tannenbaum."

The words and music to the song "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground," which the Northern soldiers sang around their bivouac fires in 1863, were writen by Walter Kittridge, in 1862.

Kittridge had just finished writing a book of patriotic songs, when he was drafted into the army. While he was preparing to go to the front he was suddenly moved to write a great song. He seized a piece of paper and a pencil, and in a few minutes had completed the words and music to "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground."

At first the piece was refused publication; but it came into popular favour from the author singing it himself, and in a short time a firm in Boston got out a song with a similar title. Then the original was printed, and met with an immence sale.

"Hail, Columbia," was written by Joseph Hopkinson in the summer of 1798, when war with France seemed inevitable. The author intended the song for a young singer who was about to appear in a performance which he feared would fail to draw an audience.

The words were set to the music of the old piece called "The President's Song." Popular feeling was running high, and when it was announced the patriotic air attracted much attention. The performance came off; the house was filled to overflowing; the song was sung, and the crowd went mad with enthusiasm. Night after night the performance was repeated, and the audiences joined in the chorus of the song till it seemed as though the volume of sound would raise the roof. The song spread like wildfire.

The Southern melody "Dixie" has several versions. The original was written by a Northerner General Albert Pike, of Boston.

GREYHOUNDS OF THE RAIL.

THE WORLD'S FASTEST TRAINS.

The craze for speed is ever with us no matter which it be that of the horse, or the motor, or the yacht. The following, therefore, concerning the speed of trains should prove of interest. Needless to say New Zealand does not figure in the list.

The fastest regular long distance run without stop in the world is on the Great Western from London to Bristol 118½ miles in 120 minutes, or practically sixty miles an hour. In order to leave passengers at Bath a car is dropped from the train without stop, a time saving device in operation on a number of European roads.

The longest run without stop made in any country is from London to Liverpool on the London and Northwestern, 201 miles, made at the rate of fifty-four miles an hour. The next longest is on the Midland, from London to Leeds, 196 mile, at the rate of fifty-two miles an hour.

The most famous American train is the Empire State Express on the New York Central, from New York to Albany, 143 miles, which travels at the rate of 53 64-100 miles an hour; and the time of the same train to Buffalo, 440 miles in 500 minutes is just a trifle faster than that of the Midland express from London to Glasgow, 447 miles in 510 minutes. Each makes four regular stops. The North Western runs a train from London to Glasgow, 401½ miles, in eight hours, making only two stops.

The Great Northern runs a train from London to Doncaster, 156 miles, without stop, in 169 minutes, at the rate of 55½ miles an hour, and the Great Central train runs over England's new road, from London to Sheffield, 165 miles, in 170 minutes, better than 58 miles an hour, slipping a car at Leicester without stop.

These fast and long runs are common to all the trunk lines in England, while in the United States the fast runs are all confined to two roads, the New York Central and the Pennsylvania. Compared with many English fast runs the time between New York and Washington and Boston is slow. The distanace to the two cities from New York is about the same, and in both cases the fastest trains make it in five hours (or a little over, now, to Boston), or at the rate of 46 miles an hour, three stops being made in each case.

For runs of nearly 1000 miles no country can show trains to compare with the New York and Chicago trains on the New York Central the best trains making the 980 miles in 1080 minutes, or at 54 miles an hour. While this is not quite so fast as the time made by the fast trains from Paris to Lyons and Marseilles, the distance is twice as great as across France.

Coming to short runs and special summer trains, undoubtedy the fastest are from Camden to Atlantic City. Here some very fast time has been made over an ideal country for fast time by both the Reading and the ensylvania. The best Reading time is 56½ miles in 50 minutes, or 66 miles an hour, while the best Pennsylvania time is 59 miles at the rate of 64 miles an hour.

These constitute all the fast regular trains in the United States. The fastest run in New England outside the Boston-New York run is from Boston to Portland at the rate of 44 miles an hour, and the showing is still poorer in the West and South. Chicago in many respects the greatest railroad centre in the world, has no fast trains outside the New York Central and Pennsylvania trains referred to.

Throughout the West, though the best trains are very luxurious, the runs are all short, averaging about 30 miles between stations and the speed nowhere averages 40 miles an hour.

Next to speed may be considered the frequency of trains, their appointments, etc. In this respect a still more pronounced difference appears in different countries with almost equal population.

More trains leave the great South Terminal in Boston in one day than are moved in one direction on all the roads of Spain and Portugal in two weeks. From one terminal in London more trains leave daily than move in ten days to supply 125,000,000 people of all Russia, in Europe and Asia.

The South Terminal in Boston not only is the largest station in the world but sends out daily more than 400 trains, nearly twice the number despatched from the Grand Central Station by the three roads starting from there. The next laragest number sent from any station in this country is about 350 from the Boston and Maine terminal in Boston, and the next about 325 from the Broad Street Station, Philadelphia. Then come the Grand Central Station, New York, and the Reading Terminal, Philadelphia.

But these figures do not equal those of the great London terminal. There one statioin sends out 700 trains daily, the greatest number from any one station in the world, and all of the twelve great terminals send out large numbers of trains.

Including all suburban trains, and figuring on a mean average of winter and summer, the regular scheduled trains leave the four great centres in the following numbers daily, the figures being for all roads and approximately correct: New York city, 1400; Boston, 1000; Philadelpia, 850; Chicago, 850. No other American city has 400.

The roadbed and the operating equipment are better in England and some parts of France and Germany than in America, and owing to the ever prevailing precautions accidents are only about one-fifth as frequent as in America. All the principal roads in England have two tracks and many main lines have four.

Turning to continental Europe it is found that France alone indulges in really fast trains and possibly she is ahead even of England in the number of trains running regularly above fifty miles an hour. The greatest travel route on the Continent is from Paris south to Lyons, Marseilles, and the Mediterranean, aand here are found fine and fast trains.

The run from Paris to Marseilles, 585 miles, is made in 750 minutes, with only six stops. Many of the shorter runs, such as from Paris to Calais, to the Belgian frontier, etc., are at the rate of from fifty-eight to sixty-two miles an hour for the regular schedule.

According to a German authority the average speed of the fastest trains in Europe is as follows: French, fifty-eight miles an hour; English, fifty-five miles an hour, and German, fifty-one. Fast trains are hard to find in Germany, and the service in this respect does not compare with France.

It takes the fastest train 227 minutes to go from Berlin to Hamburg 178 miles, which is 47½ miles an hour, and the "luxe" train, the one fast goer, between Munich and Vienna runs at only 45.60 miles an hour; but there are as a rule frequent trains throughout Germaany and the service is good.

For all the rest of Europe the speed drops to about 30 miles an hour for express trains. Italy is surprisingly slow. It takes the express 965 minutes to go from Turin to Rome, 413 miles, or only 26 miles an hour, though the Milan-Rome express makes nearly 40 mile an hour.

Between Rome and Naples, 155 miles, there are only four or five trains daily, the fastest at 34 miles an hour, while it takes 920 minutes to go 439 miles on the best train from Rome to Brindisi, a rate of less than thirty miles an hour.

The express from Stockholm to Gothenburg, the two large cities of Sweden, barely makes 30 miles an hour. In the remaining continental countries the trains are even slower.

On the English trains third-class dining-cars are now run in which the same meals are served as in the first-class coaches, but at considerably lower rates.

Such runs as that between London and Birmingham on the Great Western, a distance of 129¼ miles, made without stop in 140 minutes, or at the rate of more than 55 miles an hour, are remarkable; for this seems to be about the regular gait of many trains in England.

SPEAKING OF FLOODS.

An old soldier, whose cherished name was that of two of our Presidents, died here in Washington recently, and his passing reminds me of a story I once heard him tell. Veteran of '61 as he was. he had listened patiently to the very long story a youthful veteran of the Spanish War told. The account of hardships left him unmoved.

"Just after the Johnstown flood, my boy," said he, "there was a man in the next world who went about telling everybody how that Johnstown affair had sent him where he was.

"His listeners hung on his words—all of them, that is, except a quiet looking little man who seemed so little impressed that every time the Johnstown man got through he merely looked bored and said 'Oh, shucks!'

"The Johnstown man got tired of it after a while. It got on his nerves to have anybody act as if what happened at Johnstown wasn't of any importance. No matter how he told his story, the quiet looking little man merely said, 'Oh, shucks.'

"At last the Johnstown man spoke to a fellow who had been there a long time about it.

"'Say,' said he, 'who is that little man who keeps saying "shucks?"'

"'Who?' said the man who had been there a long time. 'Do you mean the fellow over there? Why his name's Noah.'"

Nell: "Yes, she said her husband married her for her beauty. What do you think of that?"

Belle: "Well, I think her husband must feel like a widower now."