

The life is more than creeds, principles or foundations. Living is the true test of any creed.

Many steal the creeds of others to cover up the hideousness of their own, but such a course may succeed for a time only. The truth will be known at last.

That creed which does not make us respectable citizens, which does not make our lives honest and virtuous, is one for which there is no demand to-day.

I once read of a certain man, whose name I have forgotten, to whom these remarks were attributed; "I do not care whether there is a God who one day shall judge me; I do not care whether there is a place called Hell, where I shall one day be punished; I do not care whether there is any bar of Public Opinion, before which I might be arraigned. I would do right, I would be virtuous, I would live right simply because it is right."

Few act from such a creed. Would there were many. "NEAL."

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#### SONGS OF THE WAR.

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It is worthy of remark, that the war added little or nothing to our permanent song literature. Undoubtedly this is as it should be, since the record of brother in arms against brother is hardly one to be perpetuated in song. The memories of civil war can never be crystalized into national hymns. Yet it is a source of regret to us as a people that of the countless songs to which the war gave birth, scarcely one is worthy of preservation, from a literary standpoint. It argues little for our advancement, that among such a multitude of poetasters we had so few poets. We were prolific, but weak. True we reckon to our account only a short hundred years, but we are wont to plume ourselves on having lived more in our one century than other nations in their many, and surely in the Revolution was sown seed that should, before this, have borne fruit in the Anthem of the Republic.

Every nation has its epic. The Rebellion has furnished material for the Iliad of America, which, in ages so far removed that the actors and events shall have become half mythical, some Homeric spirit shall celebrate. Fratricidal though the conflict was, there were elements in it both tragic and sublime. The liberation of a race, the patriotism of the North, the chivalry of the South, the romance of many of the scenes, (witness the Battle among the Clouds, on Look-out Mountain, and the March to the Sea), all combine to render it the loftiest subject of heroic verse, that any land has given. But this is not exactly the point in view. That sentimental individual who preferred to make a country's songs rather than its laws, has so far failed to provide matter with which to make a very deep impression upon the American heart. We have, *me judice*, nothing worthy the name of national songs. Of those most popular, two at least are borrowed from the mother country; the others certainly have distinctive peculiarities, but are hardly of a character to be commended for literary excellence. For instance, no one would fail to recognize a "star-spangled" banner as an American one, but at the same time, one scarcely likes to stake his country's reputation for good taste upon such an expression. It is, to say the least, unfortunate that the flag of the free should be so suggestive of the sawdust arena.

The south assuredly had the advantage of us in the quality of its songs. Though in Stars and Bars there is little improvement upon Star-spangled, we had nothing approaching in melody the Bonnie Blue Flag, while both the air and words of Maryland, My Maryland, were far above the average of our songs. Even the rollicking Dixie had no equal unless it might be in old "John Brown." The words of each are on a par—alike worthless. Nevertheless, that marching on of John Brown's soul was the *Ca ira* of America. If its swinging rhythm could