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THE PICTURE on the left, and that on the cover of this issue, are from "The Red Badge of Courage," the film which John Huston made for M.G.M. from Stephen Crane's classic story of the War between the States

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ONE of the heaviest bricks ever dropped in the sphere of Anglo-American relations fell during the last war. A division of troops from Georgia was arriving at a certain English village, and the band turned out to meet them. As a tribute to their place of origin, the band had chosen to play "Marching Through Georgia." It was not until they saw the Americans' fury that they realised that this is the one song from the war between the States that has not become part of the general American heritage.

From the songs of that war, familiar to most of us, Charles Chilton has arranged a programme called *The Blue and the Gray*, so named for the colour of the uniforms of the opposing forces. Listeners to *ZB Sunday Showcase* on March 24 can hear this BBC programme, in which each of the items is linked with its appropriate event. Of "Marching Through Georgia," Charles Chilton said, in the *Radio Times*: "Never make the mistake of singing that song to a Southerner, particularly a Georgian. It rubbed salt into the Confederacy's greatest wound: Sherman's march from Atlanta, Georgia (which he burnt to the ground), to the sea. This

was the march which tore the Confederacy in two and virtually finished the war."

This war, between the Confederate States and the States of the Union, was the bloodiest and bitterest war fought on American soil. Over half a million men died, and the war had a disastrous effect on the economy of the South and the unity of the nation. Even today, the fight over desegregation in the South has revived some of its bitterness.

There is no doubt that on both sides soldiers' songs played an important part. Indeed one of the Confederate generals is reported to have said at the end that the South would have won if her songs had equalled those of the North. The Union did have more songs of lasting quality, although there were hundreds of these war songs. They were sung and played on the march, in the battlefield, in camp, and at home behind the lines. They covered every possible subject from red-blooded patriotism to pathos, humour, defiance, resentment, and even downright insult.

They fall roughly into two categories, those written as patriotic songs and

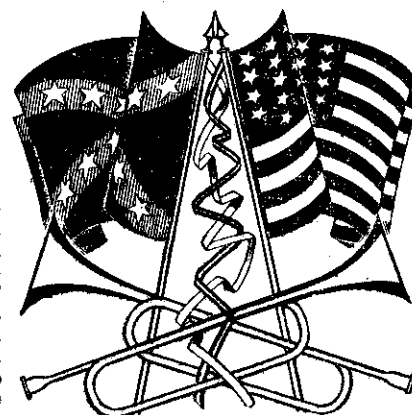
those devised and sung by the soldiers themselves. Many of the latter—as soldiers' songs have been, time out of mind—are satirical and down to earth, sometimes very low down. In this group are "Goober Peas," "I'm a Good Old Rebel," and many of the words for the tune we know as "John Brown's Body," which was a version written just before the start of the war, and sung by the 12th Massachusetts Regiment. There were such objections to the ribald and topical verses that someone asked Julia Ward Howe if she could write some suitable words, and the result was "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the North's most rousing song.

The major patriotic songs of the South were "Dixie" and "The Bonnie Blue Flag," which were both written by music-hall performers. "Dixie" was written by a Northerner for a New York minstrel show some two years before the war started. By that time "Dixie" was so popular that it became the song of the South, published in a dozen different versions. The North answered "The Bonnie Blue Flag" by altering the words, since neither side hesitated to steal a song and adapt it to its own needs, a song being as much a prize of war as arms and equipment. Song publishers did not hesitate to print songs with new or modified words, and even with new composers' names. "The Drummer Boy of Shiloh" appeared within a few weeks in both the North and the South, with the same picture

on the cover and only the flag changed. The piracy was so successful that there is still confusion over the true origin of this song. Many other songs, including "Camping on the Old Tent Ground," "The Vacant Chair," "Grafted Into the Army," and "All Quiet on the Potomac Tonight," were sung with equal sincerity by both sides.

Now, of course, the stirring melodies of the war are regarded as tunes belonging to the whole nation—with the one exception already mentioned. One of the first to recognise this national quality in the war songs was Abraham Lincoln. Sigmund Spaeth records that when the President was being serenaded at the White House (only a few days before his assassination) he officially turned "Dixie" into a national song by closing his speech with these words: "I see you have a band with you. I should like to hear it play 'Dixie.' I have consulted the Attorney-General, who is here by my side, and he is of the opinion that 'Dixie' belongs to us. Now play it."

*The Blue and the Gray* can include no more than the best representative songs on both sides. Of this collection Charles Chilton said: "They do, I believe, give us a clearer insight into the war than the dry pages of a history book ever could. For these songs voice the feelings of fighting men—from their first flush of patriotic fervour at its outbreak, to the later bitter realisation that, as the great Northern general, William Sherman, declared: 'War is hell.'"



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