

(27)

A F T E R I T S K I N D .

The Blue Veteran speaks:

Three hundred thousand strong we went in answer to the call,
Three hundred thousand at a time, a million souls in all.
Two thousand gallant men each day enrolled to meet the foe.
Now, thirty thousand every year, to "muster out" we go.

The Gray Veteran speaks:

The soldier bury light,
The soldier bury deep;
(Roll, muffled drum!)

And say why we should weep,
For "as ye sow, ye reap." —

Oh, stars of liberty,
Bright bars by blood washed white,
What shall the seeding be?

The Blue:

And we who in the prison-pen
At morn and eventide,
Have dreamed of skies ne'er seen again,
And languished there and died, --
Or languishing, did live,
What seeding did we give
The fetid, stagnant pen?

(2)

Time:

Ne'er in all the world died one
For hapless fellow's plight, --
The saving passion of God's own son,
Or any meanest wight, --
But what was true as e'er shall be,
He, losing all, gained mightily...
To garner thus, what claim have ye?

The Blue:

We seeded the land and we seeded the sea,
We seeded for freedom, we seeded for right,
That others might wake to the harvesting bright,
A bountiful harvest, unstinted and free.

The Gray:

The ocean can tell to the echoing shore!....
Spake honor and pride in our cannon's wild roar.
....And ripe in sweetness of sunshine and dew,
In His time the shimmering crop shall appear,
Approving the seed by the leaf, and the ear,
Whose glory shall flash back our glory anew.

Blue and Gray together:

Oh, stars of liberty,
Oh, bars by blood washed white, --
This harvest, may it be,
Bequest of gallantry,
Of conscience read aright!

(3)

Veterans of '99, triumphant:

Fear not, oh fathers brave,
Though south by east it fell,
Or west, the shot-gashed wave,
Our metal tested well,
Where mold of soldier's grave,
Or red of blood may lie,
Where single foot has trod
Of one who went to die
For man, or truth of God,
In double-dutied strife,
We've holy made the sod.
... You doubted hearts, -- or guns?
Why, sires, we are your sons,
Our honor, flag, you gave;
Could we do less than save,
What is more dear than life?

Blue and Gray together:

A river through the desert flows,
But sunk beneath the blinding sand,
Till coming where the vine and rose,
And palm in the oasis stand, --
By its own freshness given birth, --
It welletth forth. So through the dearth
And shrivelling dust of sordid days,
The thought of a heroic past
Hath silent run, by twilight ways,

(4)

Till summoned of the hour, it burst
A fountain through the crust of thirst,
And swelled the seeding into fruit. —
Sons, it is well.

Lord God, recast
Our hymn of praise for this return,
Our harvest-time, to blessings bruit
With councils wise for them, lest naught
Their furrows yield, so vastly fraught
With glanor, glory cosmos-wide.
.... Oh, sons, in strength the winter bide.

Veterans of '99, sturdily:

Young husbandmen are we;
Have patience if we seem
But little like to stand the storm and strain
That dark and bitter days will bring again,
Where radiance has left the golden dream.
But each to each we stand;
Shall we not trust our hand?
--Born husbandmen are we.

Time:

Except the scattered seed shall lie,
And mouldering in the furrow lie,
Like after like the gleanings ply,
Sons, fathers, whether dust in homely graves, grass-grown,
Or lulled by melodies bizarre by distant gates,
Where e're ye fell, or triumphed, empire germinates,
Dominion, new, immense, time-crowned. -- Thus have ye sown.

Albion W. Tourgée.