

HYMNS *that* FIRE *the* HEARTS of NATIONS

The Spirit of a People Expressed in Their Songs—Origin of the Famous "Marseillaise"—How England's National Anthem is Echoed in Other Lands—The "Star-Spangled Banner" and the "Battle Hymn of the Republic"

NATIONAL SONGS. When bands play and people sing on any national holiday or festival, the most prominent place in the programme is always given to the national song. Some nations have a national hymn composed especially for such occasions, but often this place of honour is given to an old folk-song that has grown with the nation and expresses in melody and words the soul of the people whose love has made it their patriotic song.

"God Save the King"

The national song whose air has been used more widely than any other is "God Save the King," the national anthem of Great Britain. It has been variously assigned to John Bull (1563-1628) and to Henry Carey (1692-1743), but it became most popular in 1745 as a singing protest against the Jacobites. Both words and music have doubtless evolved from earlier forms. The melody, with various appropriate words, has been adopted by Germany, Denmark, Switzerland, and the United States, for "America," written in 1832 by the Rev. Samuel Francis Smith, is sung to the same tune as "God Save the King."

Another famous British national song is "Rule, Britannia!" whose history is as follows: In 1740 Dr. Thomas Arne composed the music for the "Masque of Alfred," which was the joint work of James Thomson (the author of "The Seasons") and David Mallet. This masque was written for the Prince of Wales, to celebrate the accession of the House of Hanover. It is not distinguished except for the fact that it contained one gem, "Rule, Britannia!" which was destined to become famous. The song was hailed with delight when it was first heard, and quickly became popular, gradually coming to be regarded as a national song. As time has gone on, both the words and the music of "Rule, Britannia!"

have departed a little from the original version.

Among the national songs of the dominions of the British Empire are "The Maple Leaf For Ever" of Canada, words and music by A. Muir; and "The Song of Australia," words by Mrs.

Carleton, music by Singer. Other outstanding songs of the British Isles are the Irish "Wearing o' the Green," the Scots "Scots wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled," and the Welsh "Men of Harlech."

France's Song

The "Marseillaise" of France dates from the memorable year 1792. The impassioned words and music, from the heart of a young army officer, Rouget de Lisle, sprang into being in a single night. It became the marching song of the men of Marseilles as they pressed northward to save the Revolution, and when they entered Paris they gave it with such fervour that the Parisians were aroused to frenzy. They caught up

the song and sent it echoing through the streets of their city on that fateful night when the storming of the royal palace of the Tuileries gave it a baptism of blood. The following is the first verse and refrain:

*Ye sons of France, awake to glory,
Hark, hark what myriads bid you rise!
Your children, wives, and grandsires hoary,
Behold their tears and hear their cries.
Shall hateful tyrants, mischief breeding,
With hireling hosts, a ruffian band,
Affright and desolate the land,
While peace and liberty lie bleeding?
To arms, to arms, ye brave!
Th' avenging sword unsheath!
March on, march on, all hearts resolved
To victory or death.*

The words of the American "Star-Spangled Banner" were written by Francis Scott Key during the British bombardment of Fort MacHenry in 1812. Set to the melody of an English song composed some 50 years before,

COMPOSER OF "RULE, BRITANNIA!"



James Thomson, the poet of "The Seasons" and "The Castle of Indolence," who wrote the words of the national song, "Rule, Britannia!"