"God Save The King!"

Its History and its Romance

2/- *net*

by

PERCY SCHOLES

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Introduction

There has long been a great curiosity concerning the origin and history of the British National Anthem. For a hundred and fifty years no subject whatever, perhaps, has figured so frequently in the correspondence columns of the newspapers and, it may be sadly added, few subjects have been discussed with such general irresponsibility—statements that have no rational foundation whatever being seriously repeated on every occasion when the subject is brought forward and gaining credence by mere force of repetition.

In 1859 the musical antiquarian, William Chappell, went into the whole subject afresh and summarized his conclusions in the second volume of his great *Popular Music of the Olden Time;* in 1902, W. H. Cummings carried the investigation further in a valuable little book which is still on the market (*God save the King, the Origin and History of the Music and Words of the National Anthem*; Novello); in 1916 the Education Committee of the London County Council, rather oddly, took on itself to order an inquiry, which was carried out on its behalf by Drs. F. S. Boas (for the words of the song) and John E. Borland (for the music)—a small pamphlet, officially issued, embodying their findings.

The present writer, after studying everything written on the subject by his predecessors, has diligently sifted whatever further information was to be found in his own library and in the collections of books, periodicals and music in the British Museum; the Bodleian Library; the National Library of Wales; the Henry Watson Music Library, Manchester; and the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and some other American libraries. The time is not suitable for the publication of his full results but the present booklet will serve to give a general outline of them.

The preliminary and popular nature of this publication seems to make it unnecessary to cumber it with laborious statements as to the exact source of every fact mentioned, though a general indication has usually been given, or to reproduce the list of all the library officials, authorities on various branches of knowledge and members of the public possessed of some special item of information with whom the writer has been in correspondence in the course of his work; this list, it may be said, includes over one hundred names, for nothing but the most gracious compliance has met every request for help or information. Just one name, however, represents so large a

body of expert assistance that its omission would be positively ungenerous, that of Mr. C. B. Oldman, of the British Museum.

After running through this little book the reader should have gained a pretty clear idea of the circumstances in which the most frequently sung song in the world, *God save the King*, first became popular, of the probable origin of its words and music, of the use the British public has made of it at moments of crisis or controversy, of the official or unofficial adoption of the tune by other countries, and of the enormous interest which composers of various nationalities (including some of the greatest) have shown in it by introducing it into, or making it the basis of, their compositions.

September 1942 P.A.S.

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I

THE EARLY HISTORY OF WORDS AND TUNE

London gets the Wind Up

IN the autumn of 1745 London was in a state of alarm. In mid-July the Young Pretender had made his landing on the west coast of Scotland. By mid-August, after preliminary difficulties, he had raised a small nucleus army. By mid-September this had swelled to a strength that had enabled him to enter Edinburgh, and then, at Prestonpans, ten miles from that city, he had totally defeated the incompetent and insufficiently equipped General Cope.

George II had hurried back from his Hanoverian dominion and British troops in the Low Countries were being recalled and collected in a great camp at Finchley. There was dread of a march of the rebels on the capital, and something like a *sauve-qui-peut* spirit was aroused, so that many people were rushing to the banks and drawing their balances—some bankers, it is said, meeting this emergency by paying out in sixpences, and even heating them to make the customers' counting last the longer.

In imagination the people of London saw their city occupied by a horde of wild Highlanders, their Parliament dissolved or terrorized, their present King a prisoner or a fugitive, the Protestant religion weakened or proscribed, and all the liberties that their fathers had, half a century before, secured by the expulsion of the Stuarts lost again by the victorious return of that house.

The Theatres Carry On

Nevertheless London life went on. As a couple of centuries later, during the worst days of 1940, places of amusement remained open and people flocked to them to forget their anxieties. The eighty-year-old Drury Lane maintained its popularity and so did the adjoining younger house, the thirteen-year-old Covent Garden. Then there were the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, otherwise the 'Opera House' (now 'His Majesty's'), the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, the Goodman's Fields Theatre, and the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre (this last in only occasional use).

The theatres counted for a good deal in London life in the mid-eighteenth century and the names of those who then best entertained

the Londoners are still well remembered—Quin and Macklin, the elder Sheridan and Garrick (these two in the opening period of their careers), Peg Woffington and Mrs. Cibber.

Opera was temporarily in a rather low way: *The Beggar's Opera* had seventeen years before created a new vogue of 'ballad opera' which had cruelly hit Handel and his Italian operatic enterprises, so that he had turned to Oratorio (he had at this moment just completed a season of it in the King's Theatre), and ballad opera had now itself waned.

But though opera, Italian and English, was under a passing cloud there was a good deal of music heard at the theatres, music more or less of the 'incidental' kind, and at Drury Lane the very melodious composer, Arne, was 'Leader of the Band', directing the orchestra as he sat at the harpsichord or played his violin (no baton-conducting in those days) and delighting his public with a succession of bright tunes. That very year he had introduced at this theatre his stirring patriotic song, *Rule, Britannia*; he had, a few years before, composed this for an entertainment called *The Masque of Alfred*, given in the Prince of Wales's garden at Cliefden on the Thames, which entertainment was now refashioned and successfully brought before a larger public (30 March 1745). When spoken plays were given there was to be heard as much instrumental music as would in itself have made up a fair-sized concert programme. The doors of the theatre opened at five, the play began at six, and the long wait of those who went early to get good seats was pleasantly occupied by the three selections known as the 'First Music', the 'Second Music' and the 'Third Music'. Other music followed later in the evening and audiences had a way of beguiling intervals by calling on the orchestra to play popular songs in which they could join.

Arne had lately returned from a period in Dublin and in passing through Chester had picked up, as apprentice, a clever youth called Charles Burney, who lived with him in his house, played violin, viola, and harpsichord in his orchestra, copied and arranged music, and did any other useful tasks that presented themselves.

The Drury Lane Actors Spring to Arms

The manager of Drury Lane, Lacy, and his actors were fully alive both to the danger in which the country now found itself and to the excitement of the London public; they felt inspired to a noble offer

and so in *The General Advertiser* of Saturday, 28 September, there appeared this stirring announcement:

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were order'd to march forthwith to the Weſtern Parts of the Kingdom; accordingly they immediately march'd agreeable to their Orders.

We are informed, that the Nobility and Gentry, at the Meeting at York, ſubſcribed 40,000 l. towards maintaining the Troops to be immediately raiſed, for his Majeſty's Service.

We hear Mr. Lacy, Maſter of his Majeſty's Company of Comedians, at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-lane, has apply'd for Leave to raiſe 200 Men, in Defence of his Majeſty's Perſon and Government; in which the whole Company of Players are willing to engage.

The Phœnix, from South Carolina, but laſt from Scilly, is loſt on the Woolf Rock, near the Land's-End; but all the Crew were ſav'd, except one.

Yeſterday the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor held a Wardmote at Blackſmiths-Hall, for electing an Alderman for Queenhith Ward, when Mr. Deputy Davis was choſen without Oppoſition.

ENTS are taken in for this Paper, at LLOYD'S COFF

The play that Saturday night was an old one of a hundred and thirty years before, but one still popular (indeed more popular than when first performed), Ben Jonson's best comedy, *The Alchemist*, with its favourite part of Abel Drugger, in which Garrick was to be so famous but which on this occasion was played by Collins (indeed Garrick, who had been ill, was just then away in the country).

The public, no doubt, enjoyed to the full the Elizabethan fun (the servant who during his master's absence uses his house as the headquarters of a fraudulent little gang who profess to be able to supply the Philosopher's Stone and thus to make their clients rich for ever). The greater the anxiety outside the theatre the greater the reaction, no doubt, when one came within it. And certainly the actors whose patriotic offer to the Government had that day been made known must have had a hearty reception as they appeared, and a hearty send-off as the play ended.

And then, unexpectedly, the curtain rose again. Coming on to the stage were seen three of the greatest solo vocalists of the day and

behind them filed in all those actor-would-be-warriors—the whole male portion of the theatre's company.

The three soloists were the contralto, Mrs. Cibber (who was as famous in oratorio and ballad opera as she was in the spoken drama), the tenor, John Beard, and the bass, Thomas Reinhold. All of these were at this time constantly engaged by Handel. The contralto solos in *Messiah* and *Samson* had been composed four years before this for Mrs. Cibber's voice; the tenor solos in those same oratorios and in some others were composed for Beard's; and Reinhold had originally been called by Handel from Germany and had settled in London for the very purpose of singing in his works.

What followed the appearance on the stage of this lady and these gentlemen (solo and chorus) we learn from another newspaper, *The Daily Advertiser*:

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Articles on

On Friday there was a Meeting of the principal Inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark, in order to ſign an Aſſociation for the Defence of their Country and his Majeſty's Crown and Dignity, againſt the daring and inſolent Attempts of the Pretender and all his Aiders and Abettors.

On Saturday Night laſt the Audience at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane were agreeably ſurpriz'd by the Gentlemen belonging to that Houſe performing the Anthem of God ſave our noble King. The univerſal Applauſe it met with, being encored with repeated Huzzas, ſufficiently denoted in how juſt an Abhorrence they hold the arbitrary Schemes of our invidious Enemies, and deteſt the deſpotick Attempts of Papal Power.

On Saturday Mr. Alderman Hoare was choſen Lord Mayor of this City; and he will keep his Mayoralty at Goldſmiths Hall.

We hear that Sir Henry Marſhall, Knt. Lord Mayor, will be Preſident of St. Bartholomew's Hoſpital, in the room of Sir Robert Weſtley, deceas'd.

Mr. Cox and Mr. Sparrow, eminent Attorneys at Law, are appointed Under-Sheriffs of this City for the Year enſuing.

This latter quotation from the London press has before appeared in connection with the history of *God save the King*; the former one, seems, curiously, to have been always overlooked. It is with pleasure that it is here at last brought to light, since it shows us the full motive of this impressive musical demonstration. As we now realize, the men who, to the surprise and gratification of the audience, came forward to take part in the performance of this

loyal song were brave volunteers of whom the town had that day been set talking. Not merely the theatre's patriotism but also its pride were thus expressed.

The Music they Sang

What is clearly the very score that Arne prepared for this occasion is now the property of the British Museum. At the moment of preparing this book (a moment when enemies again threaten) it is safely stored in an underground hiding-place constructed for such purposes, hundreds of miles from its normal home, and from this it has, by the kindness of the Museum authorities, been removed for an hour or two for the present writer's study: it has been photographed and will be reproduced in the larger book which awaits the suitable moment for publication.

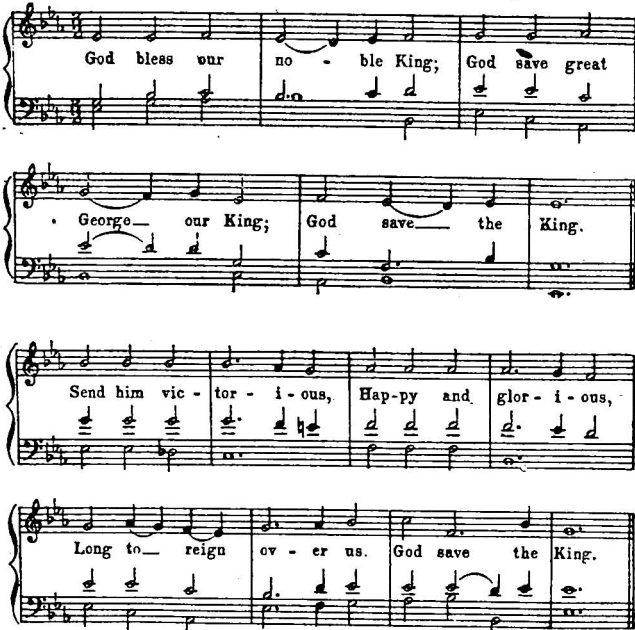
The melody differs but slightly from that we sing to-day, the chief differences lying in the final cadence and in the provision of grace notes.

Each half of the tune is sung first by the three soloists, accompanied almost certainly by the harpsichord and, doubtless (according to custom), by the string basses playing the lowest line, and is then repeated by male chorus, full strings, and horns.

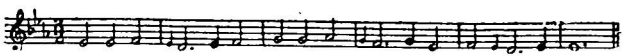
Although in the 'verse' (or solo) sections of the song the uppermost part was sung by a contralto, in the 'full' (or chorus) parts it was sung by male altos, the contralto as a chorus voice not being employed until a century after this. The whole thing was looked on as a performance by the volunteer warriors, the introduction of one female singer being due either to the fact that no good solo male alto happened to be included in the company or by a wish to make use of Arne's very celebrated sister in order to give the occasion all possible éclat and to produce the highest possible musical effect. The newspaper report just reproduced shows that the performance was recorded as essentially one by the *men* of the theatre.

It will no doubt be of interest to musical readers to see the whole song set out *as it would sound*; in the following, then, the various 'grace notes' indicated by Arne have been written out in full.[1]

Arne's Setting for Drury Lane, 1745



[1] It is mainly in the first half that Arne's 'graces' occur: he notates the uppermost part thus—



In August and September, 1942, some semi-dramatic performances, *Happy and Glorious*, based by their author, Mr. Malcolm Baker-Smith, upon the researches summarised in the present booklet, were broadcast by the B.B.C., and in their course Arne's arrangement, as above given, was several times performed. It proved to be a very attractive change from the later versions to which the public has now become accustomed. These performances were later to be repeated from broadcasting stations in other parts of the British Empire.

Other Theatres take up 'God save the King'

That, then, was Drury Lane's performance of *God save the King*—the first definitely recorded performance of what was to become the British National Anthem. As already stated, it took place on 28 September. The rival house of Covent Garden was not to be left behind and so on 10 October we find Benjamin Victor (the stage-loving Pall Mall vendor of Irish linen who had begun business as a barber near Drury Lane and was to end as Treasurer of its Theatre) writing to the absent Garrick:

> The stage at both houses, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, is the most *pious*, as well as the most *loyal* place in the three kingdoms. Twenty men appear at the end of every play; and one, stepping forward from the rest, with uplifted hands and eyes, begins singing, to an old anthem tune, the following words:
>
> O Lord our God arise!
> Confound the enemies
> Of George our King!
> Send him victorious,
> Happy and glorious,
> Long to reign over us,
> God save the King!

It will be seen that Garrick's correspondent was not exact. Probably his description of 'one, stepping forward from the rest,' applies to the Covent Garden practice, as it certainly does not to that of Drury Lane. In any case it will be seen that his memory has misled him a little as to the words sung, for he has joined into one the halves of two separate stanzas.

As it was Arne who arranged the Drury Lane version, so it was his apprentice, the nineteen-year-old Charles Burney, who arranged that for Covent Garden. Sixty years later, in writing to the great naturalist, Sir Joseph Banks, Burney said:

> I, then a pupil of Mr. Arne, was desired by some of the Covent Garden singers with whom I was acquainted, and who knew that I was a bit of a composer, to set parts to the old tune for the *new house*, as it was then called, which I did.

And Covent Garden advertised its performance of his version of the song as an attraction, for in *The General Advertiser* a little later we find it ending its announcements:

> And at the play: *God save the King.*

Similarly we find Goodman's Fields advertising in the same

journal (2 October, so it too had not waited long to catch up the attraction):

> At the Theatre in Goodman's Fields, by desire, God save the King, as it is performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, with great applause.

No doubt, not only the other London theatres but also the provincial ones followed the fashion. Bath heard the anthem about a month after the first London performance, for *The Bath Journal* of 4 November tells its readers:

> The following anthem was sung by Mr. Sullivan in Mrs. Wiltshire's Assembly Rooms at Bath on Wednesday last, being His Majesty's birthday:
>
> God save brave George our King,
> God save our noble King,
> God save the King!

Possibly this Mr. Sullivan was a London singer who went down to perform in Bath and took the song with him. He would have little difficulty in getting a copy, as it had been published as a solo or duet the previous year in a song collection (see below), which is probably where Arne himself had found it; and, moreover, within a few weeks of Arne's performance of it, was published also in a popular magazine. Or he may have been a Bath singer who possessed that song book or subscribed to that magazine, and hearing how successful London singers had been with the song had jumped at the idea of scoring a similar success.

'God save the King' in Print

Though those are the earliest definitely recorded public performances of *God save the King* there may have been private performances up and down the country, for the words and tune, as just mentioned, had appeared in a song collection published some months previously. That collection is called *Thesaurus Musicus* ('Musical Treasury'); its date cannot be minutely determined but definitely lies somewhere between April and November 1744. In this publication the song appears in the form then usual with such things, i.e. a single line of notes in the treble clef, a similar line in the bass clef, the words of the song beneath each line (suggesting duet performance by either soprano and bass or tenor and bass—with or without harpsichord), and, at the bottom of the page, a flute part, consisting of the melody transposed into the key which, when the tune

'GOD SAVE THE KING'S' FIRST RECORDED PERFORMERS
Drury Lane Theatre, 28 September 1745

MRS. CIBBER, Arne's sister and Handel's great contralto; BEARD (left), Handel's favourite tenor; and ARNE (right), the Theatre's Musical Director. (Of the bass, REINHOLD, no portrait seems to exist.)

See page

'GOD SAVE THE KING' IN HOGARTH'S 'THE MARCH TO FINCHLEY'

The central figures are a guardsman, to whose right arm is clinging a young woman ballad-seller (his wife?), whilst on the other side drags at him a violent harpy of a newsvendor (examine her expression with a magnifying glass). He is sunk in troubled thought. A constable (symbolizing national authority) threatens to strike the newsvendor.

The ballad singer's wares are sheets of *God save the King* and of a portrait of the Duke of Cumberland. The newsvendor bears on her back a cross suggesting her religious affiliation. Her merchandise consists of copies of anti-governmental publications—the *Jacobite Journal, The Remembrancer,* and *The London Evening Post.*

The artist's intention is clear; he shows the nation wavering between the Hanoverian Protestant Succession and the Stuart Romanist Succession, and how thoroughly *God save the King* had become associated with the former is evident from his choosing it as a symbol.

was played on the flute of those days, would bring it to the proper pitch to go with the voices and/or harpsichord.

The melody differs slightly from that adopted by Arne and the words of the first stanza differ too. As they are here printed they run:

> God save our Lord the King,
> Long live our noble King.

That was ambiguous. There was a king on the throne, recognized by the majority of the nation, and a would-be King in Rome, recognized by a minority. The poem as it then stood could be equally heartily sung by the loyal subjects of George II in London or by those secretive plotters who, in gatherings up and down the country, were toasting 'James III and VIII' as 'The King over the Water'. Indeed, if the song as thus worded were publicly sung both sets of partisans could openly join in it, each set interpreting the words in its own way.

This ambiguity recalls to us the amusing epigram of John Byrom (the Lancashire poet of *Christians, Awake!* and the celebrated deviser of a popular system of shorthand), which was published a year or two later:

> God bless the King, I mean the Faith's Defender;
> God bless—no Harm in blessing—the Pretender;
> But who Pretender is, or who is King,
> *God bless us all—That's quite another Thing!*

Arne and his Drury Lane colleagues clearly recognized the vagueness (intentional or unintentional) of the *Thesaurus Musicus* poem and swept doubt right away. Their version could not be sung in honour of any James, for it opened:

> God bless our noble King,
> God save great George our King.

And when, the following month, *The Gentleman's Magazine* printed the song, 'As sung at both Playhouses', it used a similar opening:

> God save great George our King,
> Long live our noble King.

Then there appeared a second edition of *Thesaurus Musicus*, with a new plate for the song, some slight changes in the music, the heading, *A Loyal Song, sung at the Theatres Royal*, and the words as in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

A 'Best Seller'

Now look at some dates.

It was in 1744 that *Thesaurus Musicus* introduced the song. In the last days of September 1745 Drury Lane brought it before the theatre-going London public and so popularized it. In October *The Gentleman's Magazine* reproduced it and so carried it into the houses of the upper and upper-middle classes, up and down the country. In November *The London Magazine* did the same thing. In December *The Gentleman's Magazine* made an attempt at a new version ('the former words having no merit but their loyalty'—true enough, but we still sing them practically unchanged!) Then came *Thesaurus Musicus* in its second edition, and various publications for vocalists quickly followed (Prelleur's *Introduction to Singing, Calliope, or English Harmony*, and so forth). There were also single sheet publications of the song—some of them almost certainly sold about the streets by the ballad singers (Hogarth in his picture *The March to Finchley* shows them so hawked).

In fact *God save the King* had at once taken its place as a 'best seller' production: everybody was printing and selling it, or buying and singing it. That Drury Lane performance of 28 September 1745 launched it into immediate popularity, it became universally known and though it was not then officially the British 'National Anthem' (the very idea of a 'National Anthem' had not yet occurred to anyone in any country) it had become, in actual fact, that very thing. Those two newspaper extracts that have been reproduced above tell us, then, of more than a mere loyal demonstration at a London theatre: they tell us of the introduction of a new British symbol. From Roman times the world had known the visible national symbol of the Flag; henceforth it was to know the audible national symbol of the Song. As we shall later see, nation after nation was to take up the idea, so that we can actually claim that on that Saturday night in September 1745 the British 'invented National Anthems'.

Where did the Song come from?

When the compiler of *Thesaurus Musicus*, in 1744, first printed the song, whence had he got it? Who had written the words? Who had composed the music?

Almost certainly he was reviving an old song (or, rather, introducing a new version of one), a song first sung over half a century

earlier in favour of the Stuarts. The British National Anthem is a Turncoat! Or let us rather say a *Convert*.

The letter of Benjamin Victor to David Garrick that has been quoted (p. 13) goes on to describe what was being sung at the theatres in September and October 1745 as:

> The very words and music of an old anthem that was sung in St. James's Chapel, for King James the Second, when the Prince of Orange was landed to deliver us from popery and slavery.

Burney in his letter to Sir Joseph Banks (p. 13), says:

> Old Mrs. Arne, the mother of Dr. Arne and Mrs. Cibber, a bigoted Roman Catholic, assured me at the time, 1746, that *God save the King* was written and sung for KING JAMES, in 1688, when the Prince of Orange was hovering over the coast; she said she had heard it sung not only at the Playhouse but in the Street.

In Burney's old age one of the nephews of George III, the Duke of Gloucester, questioned him about the source of the song and, says he:

> I replied that I knew the *words were not written for any King George*. At this he expressed some surprise; I then told him that the earliest copy of the words we are acquainted with begins—God save great *James* our King.

Burney records how, at the time Arne's arrangement was being sung at Drury Lane and his own at Covent Garden, he tried to discover the source of the song:

> At that time I asked Dr. Arne if he knew who was the composer; he said that he had not the least knowledge; nor could he guess who was the *Author or the Composer*, but that it was a received opinion that it was written and composed for the *Catholic Chapel* of James II, and, as his religious faith was not that of the Nation, there might be a political reason for concealing the names of all those, or of any person, who contributed to give interest to Catholic worship; and this may in some measure account for the author being entirely unknown.

There exists a loyal catch by Purcell in which occur, in a very prominent manner, the opening notes of the tune, and set to the four words, 'God save the King'. The suggestion has been made that Purcell here introduces a deliberate and significant quotation, and that this is a proof that the song was known earlier than 1688, in fact at least as early as 1681, which is the date of the catch. This would put the date back from the reign of James II to that of Charles II. The present writer is of the opinion that it may perhaps be so put back, but some thoughtful musicians regard the apparent quotation as merely a coincidence.

The 'Jacobite Anthem'

There is some further evidence of this Stuart origin of which Burney, in his inquiries, does not seem to have become aware. At that very time, up and down the country, a definitely Stuart version was certainly being secretly sung. What is nowadays called 'The Jacobite Anthem' has come down to us engraved on special drinking glasses used throughout the eighteenth century for toasts at the meetings of Jacobite Clubs and the like. It begins:

God save the King, I pray,
God bliss[1] the King, I pray,
God save the King.
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Soon to reign over us,
God save the King.

There are a number of different versions of this anthem and some of their stanzas can be dated by internal evidence. For instance, when we find the lines:

God bliss the Prince of Wales,
The true-born Prince of Wales,
Sent us by Thee.

we know that the reference cannot be to the Young Pretender of the 1745 attempt, of whose 'true birth' no question was ever raised, but must refer to his father, the Old Pretender, the child born to James II in 1688, just before he fled the country, of which child a Whig tale was circulated (and for a short time widely believed) that he had not been born in the palace at all, but that, in order to provide a quasi-Stuart and Catholic heir, a baby of non-royal origin had been smuggled up the back-stairs in a warming-pan. In any case these lines must date before 1701, when, by the death of James VII, that baby ceased to be the Stuart 'Prince of Wales' and became the Stuart King—'James III and VIII'.

Much more could be added on this general subject: enough has, however, been said above to show the almost certainty that our *God save the King* is a Stuart 'anthem' turned Hanoverian.

That word 'anthem', by the way, is a somewhat odd one to use for a simple metrical hymn or song. Yet from 1745 onwards we find

[1] The use of 'bliss' for 'bless' at the date when these glasses were engraved suggests a Scottish origin, the word in that spelling being still in use in Scotland but not in England. The word 'soon' is, of course, significant, and the change to 'long', in the Hanoverian version, equally so.

it so used (see newspaper paragraph on p. 10 and the quotation from Benjamin Victor on p. 13). Possibly in this we see a little confirmation of the statement that *God save the King*, in its origin, was associated with the chapel of James II. If this was so it would probably (the chapel being a Roman Catholic one) be sung in Latin. And an ancient Latin version does exist, though whether the Latin is a translation of the English, or the English a translation of the Latin, is hard to determine. The earliest date that can actually be claimed for this Latin version is 1744, when it seems to have been sung at a birthday celebration of the Princess of Wales, but there is at least the possibility that it had come down from an earlier period.

The Sources of the Sentiments

As for the sentiments and expressions of the poem, they are mostly old and well-worn.

Its recurring motif (familiar to readers of the Old Testament to-day) goes back at least as far as Coverdale's translation (1535):

> He said unto Absolom, *God save the Kynge.*

and (with 'Queen' for 'King') passed into Royal Proclamations at least as early as the year of Elizabeth's accession (1558), every such Proclamation to-day still closing with it. 'Long to reign over us' dates from at least as early as Henry VIII, when, in the 'Order of the Fleet' at Portsmouth, 10 August 1544, we find:

> The watchword of the night shall be thus, *God save King Henrye*; the other shall answer, *And long to reign over us.*

The thought of the second stanza (the 'scattering and confounding' one, to which so many people nowadays object) appears at least as early as the accession of Elizabeth, when there was published a *Song in a Foarme of Prayer* which included the following:

> Preserve her Grace, confound her foes,
> And bring them downe full lowe;
> Lord, turne thy hande against all those
> That would her overthrowe.

The whole general train of thought of the first and second stanzas (and the third one was apparently an innovation of the playhouses in 1745, since it does not appear in *Thesaurus Musicus* the previous year) is to be seen in the Fifth of November petitions that

continued to appear until comparatively recent times in the English Prayer Book:

PRIEST. O Lord; save the King.
PEOPLE. Who putteth his trust in Thee.
PRIEST. Send him help from Thy holy place.
PEOPLE. And ever-more mightily defend him.
PRIEST. Let his enemies have no advantage against him.
PEOPLE. Let not the wicked approach to hurt him.

It would seem that the 1744 Hanoverian poet, whoever he was, took over the first stanza of the 'Jacobite Anthem' pretty much as it stood, and, for his second stanza (the 'scattering and confounding' one) drew on more or less familiar sources, of which only a few examples out of very many available have above been given.

A Metrical Innovation

What is remarkable is that there seems to be no precedent for the metre of the poem. Careful search, confirmed by inquiry amongst authorities on various European literatures, has revealed no previous instance of the very effective 6.6.4; 6.6.6.4 arrangement. Drayton, in 1630, has 6.6.6.4; 6.6.6.4:

Nay 'tis a world to see,
In every bush and tree,
The birds with mirth and glee,
  Wooed as they woo;
The robin and the wren,
Every cock with his hen;
Why should not we and men
  Do as they do?

(His *Agincourt* is on much the same plan. Francis Andrewes, c. 1629, has also a poem on this plan.)

But that stanza is really two shorter stanzas brought together, and it could just as well be set out as two separate stanzas, whereas the *God save the King* stanza is a unity, with its second half heavier, by one line, than its first half, which is an extremely effective metrical device.

It's dangerous to be positive about a negative, and all the present writer can say is that if any reader of this book can recall an earlier example, in any language, of the *God save the King* metre he hopes that this reader will be kind enough to drop him a postcard.

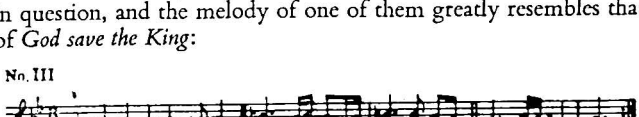
The Origins of the Tune

But though there is apparently no precedent for that metre, in English or other poetry, and, consequently, none in vocal music, there is a precedent in instrumental music, and a very happy one, since the composer in whose work it appears bears what is to us to-day the most appropriate name possible—that of JOHN BULL.

This composer was born (1562) in Queen Elizabeth's reign and died (1628) in Charles the First's. After a career as a choir boy in the English Chapel Royal, he developed into a great keyboard virtuoso. He was organist of Hereford Cathedral and then of the Chapel Royal; D.Mus. of Cambridge and Oxford Universities; Professor of Music in Gresham College, London; and, settling abroad for some reason, organist of the Royal Chapel at Brussels and, finally, of Antwerp Cathedral.

Bull left two keyboard compositions on the exact metrical plan in question, and the melody of one of them greatly resembles that of *God save the King*:

No. III



It will be noted that this, whilst it bears the signature of G minor is really, by virtue of its accidentals, in the key of G major. There is a little doubt about the accidentals, some or all of which may have been inserted by a certain early nineteenth-century musical antiquarian—the egregious Richard Clark, member, at various times, of the choirs of St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle; Eton College; Westminster Abbey; St. Paul's Cathedral; and the Chapel Royal. To hold all those posts, Clark must have possessed the gift of song, but that of sense he did not possess, and as his famous manuscript of Bull's music has now disappeared we should doubt the whole story of its existence were it not that some very respectable and reliable musicians, of high standing, actually examined it, one of them (Sir George Smart, who, as Organist and Composer to the Chapel

[1] The present writer has inserted double bars to make clear the correspondence of the phrases of this instrumental melody with the lines of the song. He has also transposed it from Bull's original key of A to the one more common to-day for *God save The King*—that of G.

Royal and conductor at the Coronations of William IV and Victoria, naturally felt a special interest in the subject) leaving a copy of it.

Anyhow, whatever be the truth about the sharper, Clark, and his suspected clerical sharpenings, there is no doubt that the metre and melodic contour of that tune are as Bull devised them, and the resemblance to *God save the King*, as printed in *Thesaurus Musicus* a hundred and sixteen years after his death, is undeniably very close.

The general rhythm of the composition is that of a Galliard, and music consciously or unconsciously based on that rhythm was then common enough in Western Europe. A few other pieces of music in Galliard rhythm possess melodies more or less resembling that of *God save the King*—a harpsichord minuet of Purcell (1696), the song *Franklin is fled away* (probably a folk song, but first printed in 1669), the Christmas Carol, *Remember, O thou man* (printed 1611), and a Genevan patriotic song, *Ce qu'è laino* (1603). From any of these the musician who first set a tune to the poem *God save the King* may have drawn ideas, but, the Bull piece presenting very much the closest resemblance, it is natural to suppose that it was in this that he found his model—though, alternatively, Bull's piece may be a keyboard setting of some folk-tune (or of some dancing galliard well known in the seventeenth century), and the *God save the King* tune may have been taken directly from that original.

A much fuller discussion of the whole question of the origin of the tune shall, at some future time, be put before the public, including an examination of the claims for other composers than Bull, which claims are constantly cropping up in the correspondence columns of the newspapers: some of these claims have, during the last century and a half, been frequently put forward and as frequently shown to be baseless, but it is hard to deal a death blow to a foolish story, whilst a really good lie may be considered immortal.

Here it may be briefly said that there is no evidence worthy of consideration to be put forward on behalf of any of the following:

HENRY CAREY (His posthumous son first put forward this claim, more than half a century after his father's death, in the vain hope that George III would give him a pension. Arne and Burney, who were responsible for the first public performances in 1745, both tried to discover the composer of the anthem and failed. Had it been Carey, who had only lately died, 1743, they would have certainly known of the fact. Burney scoffs at this Carey attribution.)

JAMES OSWALD (Pure conjecture: not a scrap of evidence.)

ANTHONY YOUNG (He was Mrs. Arne's grandfather and if *he* had been the composer Arne would certainly have known.)

ANTHONY JONES (Quite unidentifiable.)

HENRY PURCELL (Merely based on the resemblance of the minuet already mentioned.)

EDWARD PURCELL (No evidence at all.)

DR. ROGERS (Said to be 'of the time of Henry VIII' but unknown to the historians of music.)

LULLY (Claim based on the *Memoirs of the Marquise de Créqui*, which Memoirs are a recognized fabrication of the early nineteenth century.)[1]

A recent suggestion that the tune is based on a certain piece of Plainsong is quite discredited by Plainsong authorities.

A hymn tune, current in Canada and the United States, known as the 'Old Chant', and stated to derive from plainsong, is there sometimes surmised to be the original of *God save the King*, but the resemblance is slight.

There have also been vague and unsupported statements that the tune is 'an adaptation of an Irish folk song', that it 'originated in Saxony' and that it 'was taken from an old song of pilgrims in Silesia'.

Returning to the very probable direct or indirect origin in the keyboard composition of John Bull, no credence whatever should be given to Leigh Henry's extremely fanciful biography of that composer (1937), which speaks of the anthem as being written in 1588, by command of Queen Elizabeth, for a celebration in St. Paul's Cathedral of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Bull is represented as racking his poor brain in vain—'At last the close approach of the day spurred the composer to urgency. . . . In his last desperation, however, a simple strain came to him.' He and his assistants sat up all night 'copying dozens of parts of the hymn in order to be in time for the celebration'. Then they jumped on their waiting horses. 'The ride was a wild gallop. The Queen was already on her way. They must ride hard to overtake the royal procession. . . . So they go on, parting excited crowds by the cry, "In the Queen's name!" Leaping from their smoking horses they dashed through the vestry door. . . . The rich sonorities filled the cathedral as the Queen moved up the aisle to her place. . . . Opening up a diapason stop Bull inclined his head. The voices of the choristers rang out above

[1] A quite absurd claim, yet when the present King and Queen made their State Visit to Paris in 1938 they were entertained with a specially written one-act play by Sacha Guitry based on the story—an amazing piece of official ineptitude!

a throbbing pedal note.[1] For the first time in history they sang "GOD SAVE THE QUEEN".'

Glancing through the list of claimants to the composition or publication of *God save the King*, and concluding with the elaborate fiction just summarized, one may justly maintain that, whatever the value of the tune as music, no other tune in the world's history has ever inspired such bold and abundant imaginative effort.

(In very many standard books of reference, not only is some one of the above false attributions of the tune given, but it is also stated that the first printed copy appears in '*Harmonia Anglicana*, 1742'. This is a slip of William Chappell, the author of *Popular Music of the Olden Time*, 1855-9, a slip which has been copied and recopied. The first publication of words and tune was as above stated, in *Thesaurus Musicus*, 1744, and there was no issue of any publication called *Harmonia Anglicana* in 1742.)

[1] There were, of course, no pedals to English organs for a couple of centuries after this.

II

THE ANTHEM IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

The Town takes up the Song

The immediate popularity of *God save the King*, once the London theatres had introduced it to a wide public, has already been made clear to us. It became the popular street song of the day: Burney says that at the theatres, 'It continued to be sung and called for a full year after the suppression of the rebellion', and that

> It was received with so much delight that it was re-echoed in the streets, for two or three years subsequent to that time.

Horace Walpole, writing to his friend in Florence, about ten months after that Drury Lane first performance, relates an incident he had just witnessed.

The Duke of Cumberland, having at Culloden ended the rebellion, remained the hero of the period (Handel's oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*, was composed in his honour—a great military hero of Israelitish days being treated as the type of national heroism and military prowess). On 5 August 1746 Walpole was at Whitehall Stairs and saw the Duke and his company embarking there to go to Vauxhall Gardens, where the Duke was that night giving a great ball. Just then, he says, there passed 'two City Companies in their great barges', who, with a band of musicians to add to their gaiety, had been swan-hopping.[1]

The City magnates saw the royal hero and saluted him—'They laid by and played *God save our noble King*, and altogether it was a mighty pretty show.'

An Amusing Hoax

It must have been about this time that, to amuse George II, the Duke of Montague and some of his friends planned an elaborate public practical joke concerning *God save the King*.

The King was fond of masquerades, or masked balls, and many

[1] Corruption of 'swan-upping'—taking up, in the August of every year, of the young swans on the Thames, the property of the City Companies, for the purpose of marking them. It still goes on.

very splendid ones were arranged, for the pleasure of himself, the Royal Family, and the nobility and aristocracy of the day, by the famous impresario Heidegger (Handel's former partner in operatic enterprises), at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket.

Montague and his friends invited Heidegger to join them at a carouse in the Devil's Tavern, made him dead drunk, laid him on a bed and brought in the most able wax-work artist of the day (she was daughter of the famous Mrs. Salmon), who took a mould from his face. From this a mask was made and 'coloured to the most exact resemblance'.

Heidegger's valet was then bribed to give a precise description of the clothes his master was intending to wear at the next masquerade, and a suit indistinguishable from this was ordered. A man (probably an actor) of Heidegger's height and build was sought and given instructions what to do.

On the night of the masquerade, as soon as the King had entered and taken his seat, Heidegger went to his Leader of the Band and gave a signal upon which the band struck up *God save the King*, which, it is interesting to note, was already being used to greet Royalty on its appearance in public places. He then turned away and at once there stepped up the false Heidegger who (presumably as though he were the real one returned) ordered the band to play not *God save the King* but (of all things!) the Jacobite *Over the Water to Charlie*.

The band leader and his men must have been a good deal surprised at such an order, but being perhaps accustomed to all sorts of whimsical occurrences at a masquerade, did as they were told—to the consternation of the courtiers and of the audience in general.

Then, as the false Heidegger slipped out of sight, the real one came storming back, swearing that his musicians must be drunk or mad, and were going to ruin him by their appalling mistake.

The King, who had evidently been prepared for the joke, roared with laughter.

Heidegger, having corrected the supposed mistake, went into one of the dancing rooms to attend to some urgent matter there, but as soon as he was gone his counterpart reappeared, calling out, with an imitation of his voice and manner, '*Damn you for blockheads; didn't I tell you to play Over the Water to Charlie?*'

The musicians supposed from these sudden changes of instruction that Heidegger was drunk, but could do nothing but comply.

Amongst the audience were some officers of the Guards who had fought under the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden: they were for

rushing up to the music gallery and kicking the musicians out, but the Duke himself, who had been apprised of what was to happen, restrained them. The shocked assembly, however, cried '*Shame! Shame!*' and the whole room fell into the greatest confusion.

The Duke of Montague now saw that his joke was attaining its climax. He went up to Heidegger, told him that '*the King was in a violent passion, and that the best way was to go to him instantly and make an apology, for certainly the musicians were mad, and afterwards to discharge them!*' He then went to the false Heidegger and told him to do the same.

The scene (in the circle before the King) now became truly comic. Heidegger had no sooner uttered an apology for the insolence of the musicians than the false Heidegger advanced, and in a plaintive tone, exclaimed, '*Indeed, Sire, it was not my fault, but that devil's in my likeness,*' pointing to the true Heidegger, who turned round, saw this astonishing duplicate of himself, staggered, grew pale, and was speechless.

The Duke of Montague, thinking the hoax had taken a serious turn, now humanely whispered in his ear the sum of the plot, and the counterfeit was ordered to take off his mask. Here ended the frolic; but Heidegger swore he would 'never attend any public amusement again, unless that witch, the wax-work woman, was made to break the mould, and melt down the mask before his face'.

(Heidegger died in early September 1749, which fixes the date of this occurrence within a period of under four years of Drury Lane's first performance of the song.)

Eighteenth Century 'Community Singing'

God save the King, so quickly known to the whole population, was just the thing for what, adopting an American term, we now call 'Community Singing'. Theatre audiences used to call for it. George Colman the elder had introduced his first dramatic piece, *Polly Honeycomb*, at Drury Lane in 1760, and his *The Jealous Wife* made a hit the following year. Robert Lloyd, in his poem *To George Colman, Esq., a Familiar Epistle*, in the latter year, imagines the new fledged dramatist at a first night of one of his productions:

> The coach below, the clock gone five,
> Now to the theatre we drive:
> Peeping the curtain's eyelet through,
> Behold the house in dreadful view!

Observe how close the critics sit,
And not one bonnet in the pit.
With horror hear the galleries ring,
'Nosy!' 'Black Joke!' '*God save the King!*'

Black Joke was a popular tune of the day. 'Nosy' was Cervetto, the well-known leading violoncellist of the orchestra, the mark of whose race was a particularly prominent feature, to which unkind audiences often called attention. The 'horror' of the dramatist at 'hearing the galleries ring' with those musical demands was probably because it was a reminder of the frank expression of critical opinion that might later come from that powerful quarter. And the galleries' enthusiasm at this moment for *God save the King* might be partly inspired by the fact that a new monarch, George III, had just succeeded to the throne and had also just been married—Coronations and Royal Weddings naturally provoking ebullitions of loyalty.

The Regency Riots

Not all the calls from theatre audiences for the playing of *God save the King* passed without opposition. There were occasions during the reign of that same monarch, George III, when such calls became party demonstrations and provoked counter-demonstrations. Sometimes, indeed, the scenes were riotous.

There were such scenes at the time of the King's mental illness in 1788, when one party in the country wished the Prince of Wales to be made Regent, and another, hopeful of a recovery that, in fact, temporarily occurred, loyally opposed this. Thus on 15 December of that year, after the performance at Covent Garden of a new comic opera, when *God save the King* was called for and the famous bass, Bannister, and the other vocalists of the company were preparing to go on to the stage again, one man, evidently a partisan of the Prince of Wales, stubbornly refused. 'Riot' is the word *The Morning Post* uses to describe the scene that then took place, and we may suppose that the audience divided itself into noisy supporters of Bannister and equally noisy, though probably less numerous, supporters of his recalcitrant colleague.

> Bannister waited for him more than half an hour, and at last came on the stage and sung it, accompanied by some of the chorus singers. Want of room obliges us to make but few comments on the business, otherwise we

should be forward to condemn the conduct that we observed on Saturday night at Covent Garden.

At Drury Lane also, where Sheridan was manager, excitements occurred. Sheridan was a boon companion of the Prince of Wales, and a contemporary caricature expresses imaginatively the stress between himself and loyal subjects of the King in his audience. It is so devised that we are able to see both before and behind the curtain: before it is the orchestra, to which members of the audience are calling, 'Play *God save the King*', whilst behind it is Sheridan calling 'D——n it: don't play *God save the King*.' (Whatever the manager's personal wishes may have been, the song was sung in his house, and we are told that 'the huzzaing at "Scatter his enemies" exceeded all imagination.')

The King's Recovery sets his People Singing

Fanny Burney, at that time attached to the Court as one of the attendants of the Queen, gives us, in her famous Diary, many examples of the popular enthusiasm over the King's recovery and of the way in which it expressed itself in the performance of what had certainly now become, in fact, if not in name, the 'National Anthem'.

The Royal party travelled, by slow stages, to Weymouth. At Winchester 'the town was *one head*. . . . On the steps of the Town Hall an orchestra was formed, and a band of musicians, in common brown coarse cloth, and even in carter's loose gowns, made a chorus of *God save the King*, in which the countless multitude joined, in such loud acclamations that,' says Fanny, 'their loyalty and heartiness, and natural joy, almost surprised me into a sob before I knew myself at all affected by them.'

At Lyndhurst, where one of the King's brothers, the Duke of Gloucester, had a seat, the house was surrounded, and when the King and Queen, and their suite, emerged to walk about the village, 'the people, with one voice, struck up *God save the King*. . . . These good villagers continued singing this loyal song during the whole walk, except to shout "huzza" at the end of every stanza. . . . 'Twas well the King could walk no longer; I think if he had they would have died singing around him.'

'God save the King' in Church

On Sunday the party went to church and, after the service, at that moment in the proceedings when it was then usual to sing a metrical psalm—'Imagine our surprise to hear the whole congregation join in *God save the King*'.

This was, indeed, an innovation, for, despite the fact that the whole poem is of the nature of a prayer, the loyal song had not yet found its way into the churches. Says the diarist:

> Misplaced as this was, in a church, its intent was so kind, loyal and affectionate, that I believe there was not a dry eye amongst either singers or hearers.

Lyndhurst's example was evidently not followed, for nearly forty years later we find a very well-informed writer (Crosse, in his *Account of the Grand Musical Festival held in the Cathedral Church of York*, 1825) saying, 'Several attempts have been made to adapt the air to divine service, but it is too deeply connected with political and secular associations, notwithstanding the modern custom of describing it as the national anthem, ever to prove acceptable in a church'.

When George III Bathed

But the King heard his loyal song not only as he travelled down to the West, as he strolled in village streets, or sat in the village church: arrived at Weymouth he heard it whilst he was in the water.

> The King bathes, and with great success; a machine follows the Royal one into the sea, filled with fiddlers, who play *God save the King* as His Majesty takes the plunge.

There is a contemporary caricature of this scene. The King is being dipped by bathing-women; in a bathing machine, (such as many of us recall), embellished with the Royal Arms, a man-servant in the royal livery waits with a towel over his arm: from an adjoining machine the Queen and Princess Royal watch with rather anxious faces. Near the King stands the band, its members wading nearly to their waists (this last detail representing, of course, a caricaturist's liberty with fact); with them are two boy choristers, from whose mouths issue the words of the song. On the promenade can be seen two horsemen, setting out heavily laden with bales, labelled 'News for the Oracle', and 'News

'GOD SAVE THE KING' WHEN HE BATHES!
(See description opposite).

A JACOBITE DRINKING GLASS WITH ITS 'GOD SAVE THE KING'

This glass, as will be noticed, bears the date 1749. That, however, may be a late addition, as anyone possessing a diamond ring could scratch a date to commemorate some event or special Jacobite ceremony. Bles, puts the actual date of manufacture of this specimen at 'circa 1725'. The lines about the Prince of Wales, however, show that, whatever the date of the glass itself, the second stanza of the poem must have been written between 1688 and 1701.

From J. BLES: *Rare English Glasses of the XVII and XVIII Centuries,* by permission of the publisher, GEOFFREY BLES.

See page 18

for the World'—these being London newspapers that had reported the King's bathing and the loyal efforts of the local musicians.

(Some readers will remember that Thomas Hardy, in *The Trumpet Major*, has introduced this circumstance of the King's bathing to the strains of *God save the King*.)

The French Revolution and 'God save the King'

At the very moment when, with the King's happy recovery of sanity, the Regency storm was dying down in Britain the Revolutionary storm was working up in France. George III attended a great Thanksgiving Service for his recovery, at St. Paul's, on 23 April 1789; on 5 May the French States General opened, on 17 June the National Assembly was constituted, and 14 July the Bastille fell.

As, across the Channel, violent methods came to be more and more applied, Burke and those who supported him worked people at home into an ever higher state of excitement and fear lest such methods should be adopted there. Enormous political and social evils called for correction, and, unfortunately, repression rather than reform was the policy adopted.

A good deal was heard of a noisy anti-monarchical movement, and *God save the King*, which had lately been used as the battle song of those who opposed the Prince of Wales and his party, now became that of those who opposed revolutionary propaganda. To join or not to join in the public performance of *God save the King* was to declare one's political sympathies. Thus that very actor-singer Bannister, whom we have seen insisting on one of his colleagues joining in the song, was now charged with not singing it himself; probably the charge was quite mistaken, but, on one occasion, at any rate, he was hissed at the theatre for 'not seeming to join in *God save the King*'.

In some towns 'parties of bold republicans affected to hate the anthem *God save the King*, so that at Brighton, Salisbury, and Lynn, coercion was used to prevent their entering the theatre, where they interrupted the actors who sang it'.

Some parodies were circulated. Horne Tooke, who had joined the London Corresponding Society (which, with its 30,000 members in London alone, was the most powerful agency working in favour of reasonable reform), used to sing one of these. Henry Angelo, in his *Reminiscences* says:

> The celebrated Mr. Horne Tooke lived in Richmond Buildings, Dean

Street, Soho, within a hundred yards of our house. He frequently was a visitor there; and he used to amuse old Mr. Sheridan [father of the statesman-playwright-theatre manager] and some others, by singing a parody on *God save the King*. This playful humour was chiefly exercised at his own house; for my father, never forgetting that he was a foreigner, and obligated to the royal family, would not allow even his best friends to speak disrespectfully of the king, or the government, under his roof.

Fierce Guillotine Parodies

That parody may have been a relatively mild one, but others were ferocious.

The Government decided to prosecute the leaders of the Corresponding Society, who, though not always well-balanced thinkers, were, in general, worthy men of high principles. The proceedings in court lasted from 28 October to 5 November 1794, and the report in *State Trials* occupies no fewer than twelve hundred pages of double-column small print.

Louis XVI had been executed in January 1793 and an item in the charge against the Society was that at one of its meetings there had been distributed a circular in the form of a mock theatre handbill, advertising '*A New and Entertaining Farce called La Guillotine or George's Head in a Basket*'. The handbill ended, 'In the Course of the Evening will be sung in Full Chorus *Ça Ira* and *Bob shave Great George our* ——!'

The circular, it was proved, had been distributed not by officials of the Society but by an unknown individual (possibly an informer or an *agent provocateur*), and had been expressly disowned by the Society's responsible members. The *Bob shave* parody mentioned above actually existed, and can be found on a seditious and highly inflammatory print of the period, *A Cure for National Grievances, Citizen Guillotine, a New Shaving Machine*. The last stanza runs:

> Long live great Guillotine:
> Who shaves off Head so clean
> Of Queen or King.
> Whose power is so great,
> That ev'ry Tool of State
> Dreadeth his mighty weight,
> Wonderful Thing! ! !

Another bloodthirsty parody is that of the American, Joel Barlow, who had gone to France in 1788 and in 1791 had passed

over to London, where he became connected with a 'Society for Constitutional Information', the following year returning to France as one of two delegates 'to present the address of this Society at the bar of the National Convention'. Barlow was something of a poet. In his earlier days, as a Presbyterian minister, he had published verse translations of the Psalms.

On p. 16 there was mentioned the fact that *The Gentleman's Magazine*, the first periodical to print *God save the King* (October 1745—just after its public performance at Drury Lane), had in a following issue put forward an improved poem for the song. This began:

Fame, let thy trumpet sound,
Tell all the world around
Great George is King.

Barlow must have seen this *Gentleman's Magazine* production of nearly half a century before, since his effort begins similarly.

SONG TO THE GUILLOTINE

Fame, let thy trumpet sound,
Tell all the world around
How Capet fell.
And when Great George's poll
Shall in the basket roll
Let mercy then control
The Guillotine.

When all the sceptered crew
Have paid their homage to
The Guillotine,
Let Freedom's flag advance,
Till all the world, like France,
O'er tyrants' graves shall dance,
And peace begin.

The Parodies bring Anti-Parodies

There were rejoinders to these really vicious parodies—sounder in sentiment, perhaps, but hardly higher in poetical value. Here is a part of one of them called *Jacobinism Displayed, a New Song*:

God save great George, our King;
Long live our noble King;
God save the King.

Hail British Liberty;
From French Equality,
Bloodshed and Anarchy,
May us [*sic*] be Free.

How have these Savage Fiends,
Carried on their designs
Thro' Seas of Blood;
Think on the Massacres,
And shocking Cruelties,
Of all Ranks and Degrees,
By this curs'd Brood.[1]

Think on their hellish Spleen,
To their once lovely Queen,
View her Distress;
In prison's horrid gloom
Waiting the dreadful doom,
There Traitors might Presume
On her to Pass.

But this Castrophe [*sic*]
Of this curs'd Tragedy
Surpasseth all;
Drag'd from her dreary Cell,
To where her husband fell,
Murder'd by Imps of Hell,
Pity her Fall.

The Attempt on the King's Life

Drury Lane Theatre, which in 1745 was the scene of the first recorded public performance of *God save the King*, was fifty-five years later the scene of some especially fervent performances of it.

On 15 May 1800 George III attended a military review in Hyde Park. When a volley was fired a ball wounded a gentleman standing only a few paces from the King. This was afterwards explained as accidental.

On the evening of the same day the King went to the theatre. As he entered the house the orchestra, as usual, played *God save the*

[1] The rhyming of this stanza is so extraordinary that one is led to surmise that the poet was in the habit of mispronouncing certain words. Did he perhaps pronounce the first half of 'fiends' as one pronounces 'fie', and 'massacres' as 'massacrees'?

King, and, in view of the morning's occurrence we may be sure that the audience were prepared to give their monarch a hearty reception.

But just as he entered the Royal Box at the side of the stage, and came to the front to acknowledge the sympathetic applause that broke out, a man in the pit stepped on to a bench next to the orchestra, drew a pistol from his pocket and fired at him.

The audience was at once in an uproar, but the King kept calm. He had involuntarily stepped back a pace or two when he saw the weapon, but he immediately came to the front again, 'put his opera glass to his eye', and 'looked round the house, without the smallest appearance of alarm'. To the Lord Chamberlain, who begged him to retire into the adjoining room, he replied, 'Sir, you discompose me as well as yourself. I shall not stir one step.'

The members of the orchestra had at once seized the would-be assassin, one Hadfield, and dragged him to the music room under the stage.

The singer Kelly (Mozart's friend and one of the original singers in *Figaro*) now came forward and calmed first the Queen, by answering her anxious questions whether the would-be assassin was secured, and then the audience. '*God save the King* was called for, and received with shouts of applause, waving of hats, etc.'

'During the whole of the play,' (it is Kelly whose account is being quoted) 'the Queen and the Princesses were absorbed in tears: it was a sight never to be forgotten by those present.' The King, however, following his invariable custom, during the interval between the play and the afterpiece took a placid nap, and this indifference to danger undergone raised the feeling of the audience to greater heights of loyal devotion.

When the play ended the audience loudly called for still another performance of *God save the King*. Whilst it was being sung Mrs. Jordan, the famous actress, handed to Kelly a piece of paper from the manager of the house, the playwright-politician, Sheridan. It bore a stanza which he had written on the spur of the moment:

From every latent foe,
From the assassin's blow,
God save the King.
O'er him Thine arm extend;
For Britain's sake defend
Our father, prince, and friend.
God save the King.

The audience cheered and called for its repetition and it was sung three times.

A popular print of the day depicts the attempted assassination. On a curtain, above the King, Sheridan's extra stanza is inscribed.

When King Edward VII came to the throne, and people were indulging in one of their periodical discussions of the National Anthem, there was a proposal that Sheridan's stanza of a century before should now be made a permanent part of the National Anthem. Nothing came of this and it may be admitted that the presence in the National Anthem of a stanza conjuring up visions of pistols, daggers and bombs would be unpleasant and tactless—and quite unnecessary, considering that the very words 'God save the King' constitute a prayer against every kind of danger.

Should any reader, loyal to the throne, feel resentment against Sheridan for his attitude on the Regency question, as represented in the caricature of 1789 (see p. 29) he may perhaps be inclined to forgive him in view of the incident recorded by this print of eleven years later.

Lively Scenes at Covent Garden

A parody that has nothing to do with political feeling became famous in 1809. This was the battle song of the Covent Garden O.P. (Old Prices) Rioters. The full story, which abounds in colourful incident, cannot be told here.

Kemble, the manager, had reduced the number of cheap seats and also increased the prices, and night after night organized protests were made. People went to the theatre and paid the enhanced prices merely to demonstrate against them. One man was there nightly with a watchman's rattle, another with a dustman's bell 'which he rang with a perseverance and strength astounding to all beholders'. Three or four young fellows even managed to smuggle into the house live pigs, which they pinched at intervals. Sticks, umbrellas, catcalls and bugles were also used.

The instant the performance began, the audience, who had previously been sitting with their faces to the stage, as an audience generally does, wheeled round, to a man, and turned their backs upon it. When the performance concluded, which, in consequence of the fearful uproar, was frequently as early as half-past-nine o'clock, they united in singing a parody of *God save the King* of which the first verse ran thus:

God save great Johney Bull,
Long live our noble Bull,
God save John Bull!

Send him victorious,
Loud and uproarious,
With lungs like Boreas,
God save John Bull.

Then followed the O.P. dance and a variety of speeches, and then the rioters would quietly disperse.

These pleasant scenes continued for three months (18 September to 16 December) and then Kemble capitulated. He appeared before the curtain, formally apologized, and announced that the prices would be reduced. The rioters then hoisted a placard, 'WE ARE SATISHED', and dispersed—not, we may guess, without a hearty performance of the orthodox version of *God save the King*.

Who is to be saved—King or Queen?

This is a question about which theatre audiences once contended. The Prince of Wales's consort, Caroline of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, turned adrift by her husband, had been living abroad. Hearing, in 1820, of her husband's accession to the throne as George IV, she returned, and at once became the object of popular demonstrations of sympathy. Of the case brought against her in the House of Lords, and of the attempt to pass a Bill of Pains and Penalties aiming at her degradation and divorce, there is not space to write here: it must suffice to say that public feeling was too strongly in her favour for the Bill to be proceeded with. This is a mere reminder of some of the events that immediately preceded the incident thus recorded in *The Observer* of 13 November 1820:

> On Saturday evening, within the walls of this theatre, as without, the popular feeling was in full action, and the predominant sentiment delight at the triumph of Her Majesty. . . . The performance of *The Beggar's Opera*, with the exception of some political allusions, which are always honoured with a lively notice, passed quietly on to its conclusion. The popular feeling began to display itself in regular order, by the exclamation of a few voices, 'Cheers for the Queen', which ran through the house like a *feu de joie*, until at length it deepened into one simultaneous burst of acclamation. . . . *God save the Queen* to the tune of *God save the King*. . . . Mr. Russell advanced to the front of the stage, leading Madame Vestris with a due retinue for a chorus in her train. And the British anthem was commenced, amidst acclamations that shook the house. In the two first verses the literal text was adhered to by the performers, but the audience, whenever the masculine pronoun occurred, substituted the feminine in one loud note, which rendered the stage chorus, for the instant, inaudible.

During the following year, when the Queen visited Covent Garden Theatre similar scenes occurred.

At last one special version of the National Anthem was produced in the Queen's favour. It began as follows:

Oh! all ye Pow'rs divine,
Look down on Caroline,
A British Queen.
May she triumphant rise,
Over her Enemies,
Whose malice she defies.
God save the Queen.

When the Coronation took place, the following July, *God save the King* made what seems to be its first appearance on such an occasion. Attwood (a pupil of Mozart and at this time organist of St. Paul's Cathedral) made fine use of it in the orchestral introduction to his Westminster Abbey Coronation Anthem, *I was glad*, and then at the succeeding banquet the song itself was 'sung in fine style by the whole choir, the chorus being swelled by the company, all standing'.

'All standing'—when did that custom begin? It is curious that the three compositions for which, amongst British people, 'all standing' is the rule all date from a period of only six years—Handel's *Dead March in 'Saul'* (first performed 1739), his 'Hallelujah Chorus' in *Messiah* (first performed 1742), and *God save the King* (first recorded performance 1745).

King William shocks his Chief Musician

When in 1831 the new London Bridge was opened by William IV, Sir George Smart had to provide a glee party. After the ceremony the King and Queen dined in the middle of the bridge. When this was over the choralists sang *God save the King*. Here, in Sir George's own words is what followed:

Immediately after we had sung *God save the King*, Mr. and Madame B——, in costume, stepped forward, and to my infinite astonishment, he played *God save the King* with his knuckles on his chin, accompanied by his wife's voice. The King called me to him and asked who they were. I told him, and said I was sorry they had intruded without permission. 'Oh no, no intrusion,' said the King, 'it was charming, tell them to perform it again.' Of course I told them it was encored, by command. With great delight to themselves, and much to the chagrin of my party and myself, they immediately complied with the Royal command.

When Queen Victoria was Crowned

How was the National Anthem performed at the Coronation of Queen Victoria? According to Harriet Martineau, merely on the organ:

> At half-past eleven the guns told that the Queen had arrived; but as there was much to be done in the Robing Room there was a long pause before she appeared. A burst from the orchestra marked her appearance at the doors, and the anthem *I was glad* rang through the Abbey. Everybody rose . . . The *God save the Queen* of the organ swelled gloriously forth after the recognition.

The British National Anthem at the Tomb of Britain's Enemy

In 1855 the Queen, Prince Consort, and Prince of Wales made their notable visit to Paris.

The Queen and the Prince of Wales (aged fourteen) visited the tomb of Napoleon at the Invalides, the Prince in Scottish Highland costume. The Queen bade the young Prince pay homage on his knees. 'A thunderstorm broke out and the notable scene moved to tears the French generals who were present.' An eye witness wrote:

> Conceive the Queen being led by the Emperor by torch-light to visit the tomb of Napoleon, the organ of the Invalides playing *God save the Queen*.

Who is the present writer to criticize a Queen? Yet to him the whole proceeding seems to be as incongruous as can be imagined. Think of the European devastation accomplished by that man. Think of the thousands of British homes bereaved. Think of the army and the invasion fleet long assembled near Boulogne. And then think of a British monarch kneeling at that tomb. Surely on this occasion royal tact overstepped the mark?

Queen Victoria and the Kindly Inventor

With all the playing and singing of *God save the Queen* to which Queen Victoria was exposed she never got enough of the tune. Such, at any rate, was the impression of an ingenious inventor who helped her to a means of more adequately celebrating her first Jubilee (1887) by presenting her with a bustle fitted with an ingenious

automatic apparatus so designed that every time she sat down the tune should issue from it.[1]

[1] It has been learnt with surprise that some young people of to-day do not know the meaning of the word 'bustle'. A dictionary consulted is found to describe it, all too baldly, as an 'Old fashioned device for making women's skirts project behind'.

III

'IMPROVEMENTS', NEW NATIONAL ANTHEMS, HYMN IMITATIONS, TRANSLATIONS INTO OTHER LANGUAGES, CONTINENTAL AND AMERICAN ADOPTION, ETC.

Improvements through Six Reigns

No sooner had *God save the King* been introduced or reintroduced to a wide public, through the performances at the theatre, than loyal and public-spirited poets began those noble efforts to improve it or add to it that have continued ever since—and seemingly ever will continue.

The version about a month later (November 1745) in *The Scots Magazine* is notable as embodying some ingenious tri-syllabic rhymes:

George is magnanimous,
Subjects unanimous,
  Peace to us bring;
His fame is glorious,
Reign meritorious;
Let him rule over us;
  God save the King.

From France and Pretender,
Great Britain defend her,
  Foes let them fall;
From foreign slavery,
Priests, and their knavery,
And Popish reverie,
  God save us all.

The very next month *The Gentleman's Magazine* came out with that 'Attempt to improve "God save the King" ' which has already been mentioned (pp. 16, 33). Like most such attempts it reproduces in other words some of the bellicose and defiant thought of the original second stanza (the 'Confound their politics' one):

Fame, let thy trumpet sound,
Tell all the world around,
  Great George is king;
Tell *Rome*, and *France* and *Spain*
BRITANNIA scorns their chain;
All their vile arts are vain;
  Great GEORGE is king.

In the next reign, that of George III, for the wedding of this monarch, a special version was published in *England's Glory, A Collection of Loyal Songs sung at the Theatres, Vauxhall, Ranelagh, the Musical Societies, etc.* This version opened:

See Royal Charlotte come!
Sound Trumpet, beat the Drum,
  Britons rejoice.
Whilst Bells melodious ring,
We'll all in Chorus sing,
God save Third George our King
  And bless his choice.

The events of history are mirrored in the versions of *God save the King* as they succeeded one another, and so, forty years later there were, naturally, some bold anti-Napoleonic treatments of the theme, such as one of 1803, of which the second stanza ran:

See the *Corse* threat'ning stands,
Midst all his fire-brands,
  Vomiting flame!
Soon shall his insolence
Sink into impotence;
Britannia's sure defence
  Is GEORGE's name.

This appeared in a weekly journal, *The Royal Neptune*, and was also to be bought as a sheet publication, at '2s. 6d. for Fifty, or 4s. per Hundred for Distribution'. As will have been noted it was 'hot stuff' and it is pleasing to note that the publisher bore an appropriate name—'J. Ginger'.

Of all the many versions one of the most amusingly perverse is that sung at a banquet at Calais, in 1814, in honour of the Duke of Clarence (afterwards William IV), son of George III. Napoleon being now in Elba (and safely there for ever as was thought), the Duke, as Lord High Admiral, had been entrusted with the task of ferrying Louis XVIII across the Channel to take possession of his kingdom. Note not only the accentuation of this version, but the rhyming of its second half:

God save noble Clarence
Who brought her King to France.
  God save Clarence!
He maintains the glory
Of the British Navy.
O God make him happy;
  God save Clarence.

A touch of something like true poetry at last blows into the poem with a version written for the accession of George IV (1820), *Great George the Fourth is crown'd* (by Gilbert Flesher, Esq., which active 'Esq.' lived to greet two more monarchs with his poetical pen). Of this one of the new stanzas runs:

Lo where the royal Train
Sweep o'er the smiling Main,
Like swans on wing:
Blue waves your Monarch hail;
Neptune a prosperous gale
Yield to his swelling sail:
God save the King!

(Five years later the first passenger railway was opened and 'Royal Train' by and by took on a different significance.)

For the coronation of the next monarch, William IV (1830), 'Mr. Arnold' (most probably the Manager of Drury Lane; he was son of Dr. Arnold, Organist of Westminster Abbey and the Chapel Royal) published a version in *The Times*. The original first stanza was adapted to accommodate the name of the new king; the Editor of *The Times* admitted that this was 'not ill managed' but protested, 'Why alter the other parts of the national song?' One of these 'other parts' introduced the usual defiant note:

Or should some foreign band
Dare to this favour'd land
Discord to bring;
May our brave William's name,
Proud in the lists of fame,
Bring them to scorn and shame,
God save the King.

(What appears to have been this version was sung at Drury Lane, on 28 June, which confirms the surmise as to the identity of poet Arnold.)

A version by Sir John Stevenson, organist of the Vice-regal Chapel at Dublin, was not very adroit in its treatment of the dissyllable 'William', but had the tact to include the Queen in the scheme of salvation:

God save William our King
With Adelaide we sing,
Long live the King.

The musical journal of the day, *The Harmonicon*, received this

innovation rather churlishly, remarking that the reference to the Queen 'must be regarded as a temporary compliment'.

For Queen Victoria's Coronation, seven years later, that 'Gilbert Flesher, Esq.', already quoted produced a version which boldly grappled with the difficulties of the new name. It will be realized that the poem, popularized in the reign of a one-syllable 'George', for three-quarters of a century required the use of no other name. But the time came when it must (if any name was to be included), accommodate the two (or three) syllable 'William', and now the three (or four) syllable 'Victoria' called for treatment.

There is a way round almost every difficulty. Flesher, adopting the three syllable treatment, offered:

God save Victoria, Queen

and

Lord, on Victoria pour,

but another poet, Rev. W. H. Henslowe, determined to do justice to the individual rights of every syllable and to tolerate no merging, provided the British public with a set of six stanzas beginning:

God save Victoria,
Long live Victoria,
God save the Queen.

Probably the most ingenious treatment of the name, however, is that of a German genius, who provided a stanza which the present writer has never been able to find in its entirety, but half of which is given by the great singer, Clara Novello, in her *Reminiscences*. This good man, an optimist, felt that under the tactful control of a young woman the nation would at last forget its traditional political division, and he expressed the idea felicitously:

O beauteous name
Which doth combine
Both Vig and Tory.

It was not long after this that another Royal Wedding occurred to gladden the poets with opportunity. Drury Lane, which had already accumulated so many associations with the song, celebrated the great event with something spectacular, called an 'Emblematical Tribute', during the course of which the National Anthem was sung with this extra stanza:

Joy to our lovely Queen,
Noble of heart and mien,
Virtuous as fair!

Joy to the manly breast,
Where her true love shall rest,
Happy, content and blest,
Hail, matchless pair!

The poets were now working full time, and when the Queen and her Consort went in state a fortnight later to that same theatre they were greeted with an enlarged edition of the Anthem, part of the enlargement running as follows:

Welcome to Albion's Isle,
Prince, whom Victoria's smile
Lit o'er the wave!
Writ in the scroll of Fame,
Albert, long shall thy name,
Kindred and country claim
With England's brave.

Two days later the happy couple, in their desire to be fair to all, attended the rival house, Covent Garden, 'her Majesty having, with admirable taste, selected for representation Sheridan Knowles' exquisite play of *Love*'. Says *The Musical World*, from which the foregoing particulars of the visit to Drury Lane have been taken:

At the rise of the curtain, *God save the Queen* was sung with prodigious effect by the whole company, the talented lessee herself [Madame Vestris] with admirable good taste, singing the additional complimentary stanza in honour of Prince Albert, and which stands in fine contrast to the trumpery additional verses we have just quoted as being sung at Drury-Lane,

Oh, Lord! Thy blessings shed
On royal Albert's head!
God save the Prince!
Hear, Lord! a nation's voice!
Long in their sovereign's choice
May England's sons rejoice!
God save the Prince!

At the close of the evening the National Anthem was again performed, 'on each occasion the effect being heightened to the audience by the blazing of that magnificent star of revolving brilliants which lights at the name of VICTORIA in the masque of the *Fortunate Isles*, and by the hovering over the assembled company of the 'infantile angel spirits' who bear the armorial banners of her Majesty and Prince Albert.'

It must have been grand!

Both Accession and Marriage were celebrated by many other attempts at the embellishment and enrichment of the National

Anthem, and when the royal children began to appear there were still more.

Then, in 1858, there was another Royal Marriage, that of the eldest of those children, the Princess Royal, on whose union with the Crown Prince of Prussia Mr. Alfred Tennyson implored a blessing as follows:

God bless our Prince and Bride!
God keep their lands allied,
  God save the Queen!
Clothe them with righteousness,
Crown them with happiness,
Them with all blessings bless,
  God save the Queen!

('God keep their lands allied?' Alas! The fruit of that marriage was to be Kaiser Wilhelm II.)

The Queen's widowhood, in 1861, brought a version by the famous Nonconformist preacher, Rev. J. Newman Hall. Its first two stanzas run:

God save our gracious Queen!
Long live our noble Queen!
  God save the Queen!
Lord heal her bleeding heart,
Assuage its grievous smart,
Thy heav'nly peace impart.
  God save the Queen.

Our Royal Widow bless!
God guard the Fatherless!
  God save the Queen!
Shield them with loving care;
Their mighty grief we share;
Lord hear the people's prayer—
  God save the Queen!

In 1882 occurred one of the several attempts at the assassination of the Queen, one Roderick McLean lying in wait for her at Windsor railway station and, with fortunate incompetence, firing a pistol at her. This alarming incident is, no doubt, what was in the mind of Rev. Frederick Kyle Harford when, in an edition of the National Anthem with which he had to do, he included the stanza:

Saved from each traitor's arm
Thou Lord, Her Shield from harm
  Ever hast been.

Angels around her way
Watch, while by night and day
Millions with fervour pray—
God save the Queen.

The two Jubilees of 1887 and 1897 brought many new versions and additions. Here is a stanza from a version issued by the Sunday School Institute in 1887 and 'sung in many churches':

Sorrow and joy her lot,
Yet Thee she ne'er forgot,
Wife, Mother, Queen.
Purity, love and grace
Have met in sweet embrace,
Blessing the human race,
Our Empress Queen.

And here is a stanza from a version written by some anonymous poet for the second Jubilee:

Thou who for threescore years,
In sunshine, cloud and tears
Hast kept our Queen,
Still be her Guide and Stay
Through life's uncertain way,
Till dawns the perfect day:
God bless the Queen.

This is, perhaps, rather happier than some such effusions—Piety and Loyalty being, alas! great promoters of doggerel, and when they combine, as in national anthems, sometimes dropping to their lowest levels.

A stanza by Longfellow is said to have been first sung in this second Jubilee period (though that poet had been dead for fifteen years). This was at Her Majesty's Theatre, at the opening of the new building (on the site already similarly occupied for a couple of centuries). *The Times* reports that, before the opening play, 'Mrs. Tree came before the curtain and delivered some verses written by the Poet laureate' (Alfred Austin). These ended:

Long may she linger, loved upon the scene,
And long resound the prayer—*God save the Queen.*

Whereupon the curtain went up and there was discovered young Miss Clara Butt, 'supported by a large contingent of the Queen's Hall Choral Society'. They sang the prayer alluded to, including in it the Longfellow verse in question:

Lord, let war's tempests cease,
Fold the whole world in peace
Under Thy Wings.
Make all the nations one,
All hearts beneath the sun,
Till Thou shalt reign alone,
Great King of Kings.

With the accession of Edward VII, in 1901, the poets again became active. A revised version by Mr. H. W. Taunt of Oxford abolished the 1745 third stanza (with its blunt admonition to the sovereign to 'defend our laws, and ever give us cause', etc.)[1] and substituted a stanza of which alternative versions were given side by side:

Thy choicest gifts in store
On him be pleased to pour.
God save our King.
Watch o'er him day by day,
And guide him in Thy way,
Oh! shelter him, we pray,
Beneath Thy Wing.

Thy choicest gifts in store
On both be pleased to pour,
Our King and Queen.
Oh! shelter them we pray,
Watch o'er them day by day,
And guide them in Thy way,
Our King and Queen.

A vague 'C.B.V.' at this time produced a happy botanical stanza:

Shamrock and Thistle join
With England's Rose to twine,
Blossoming now;
As from one Parent stem
Circle the diadem,
Whose triple glories gem
His Kingly brow.

The Edwardian variants were many but perhaps enough versions have already been quoted to satisfy reasonable readers.

New National Anthems

In addition to variants of the now official British National Anthem, there have been produced, to the old tune, some com-

[1] It must be remembered that this third stanza with its note of caution, had been added to the poem within a century of the decapitation of one monarch for not 'defending our laws' and little over half a century of the exile of another on the same charge, and at a time when the monarch on the throne was the more or less despotic ruler of a foreign state. No Briton to-day feels that the final petition of his National Anthem is required but (from sheer British conservatism, presumably) Britons still include it, probably reasoning (if they think about it at all), 'Anyhow it does no harm!'

pletely new ones (actually under the title of 'New National Anthem').

There is, for instance, Shelley's *New National Anthem* of 1819, the year of that sombre tragedy, Peterloo, so called derisively, in imitation of the 'Waterloo' of four years earlier, its nature being that of a charge of the Yeomanry against demonstrators in St. Peter's Field, Manchester. Those were the days when, out of the country's population of twenty millions, less than half a million possessed the vote, to which anomaly the working classes were coming more and more to attribute the neglect of their interests by the government, and the consequent hardships they suffered. They were also days of restrictions on the Freedom of the Press. And they were days in which the ruling classes had not forgotten the French Revolution and still went in fear of its example on their own countrymen.

The injury of some hundreds of poor people, and the death of a few of them, deeply impressed Shelley. Several of his boldest protests belong to that year—his *Mask of Anarchy*, his *Lines written during the Castlereagh Administration*, and his *Song to the Men of England*. In his *New National Anthem* he treated Liberty as the rightful monarch of his country. Here are the first and last of the six stanzas:

God prosper, speed, and save,
God raise from England's grave
  Her murdered Queen!
Pave with swift victory
The steps of Liberty,
Whom Britons own to be
  Immortal Queen.

Lips touched by seraphim
Breathe out the choral hymn,
  'God save the Queen!'
Sweet as if angels sang,
Loud as that trumpet's clang
Wakening the world's dead gang,
  God save the Queen!

Another *New National Anthem* is that of the 'Corn Law Rhymer', Ebenezer Elliott, written in 1830, when the great cry was for the repeal of the taxes that, for the benefit of native agriculturalists, were imposed on imported corn—the 'Bread Taxes', as reformers called them. The accession, in that year, of William III had given Elliott new hope (delusively, as it turned out, for it was not until the next monarch, Victoria, had been nine years on the throne, that those taxes were repealed).

Who came when hope had fled?
Who will untax our bread,
  Who save the State?
Who storm the robbers' den?
Sole theme of tongue and pen,
William, the King of men,
  William the Great!

Hark how the people sing,
God save our patriot King,
  God save the State!
Long may he rule the brave,
Smiling at fool and knave,
Ere truth inscribe his grave—
  'WILLIAM THE GREAT'.

Elliott's *When wilt Thou save the People*? though not styled a 'New National Anthem' and not written to the old tune, was obviously intended as one: he had now given up his hope in help from the throne, and where the regular national anthem appealed to God to 'save the King' his poem appealed for the salvation of the King's subjects. This noble and inspired poem, being still sung to-day and to be found in anthologies, is, perhaps, too well known to call for complete quotation here, but the first stanza may be given, as a reminder of its force and rhythm:

When wilt Thou save the people?
  O God of mercy, when?
The people, Lord, the people,
  Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they;
Let them not pass, like weeds, away—
Their heritage a sunless day.
  God save the people!

At about the same time as Elliott was composing those two poems, William Hickson, a musician, the promoter of popular singing classes and author of popular singing-class books, brought out in one of these latter a poem to the old tune, one that is still not forgotten, since it is found in some hymn books. It, again, is a true 'National' Anthem, i.e. one taking not only the monarch as its theme (though he has his stanza), but the welfare of the whole nation. At the end, as will be noted, national feeling expands (as true national feeling should) into international.

God bless our native land.
May heaven's protecting hand
Still guard our shore.
May peace her power extend,
Foe be transformed to friend;
And Britain's rights depend
On war no more.

Oh Lord, our monarch bless
With strength and righteousness:
Long may he reign.
His heart inspire and move
With wisdom from above;
And in a nation's love
His throne maintain.

May just and righteous laws
Uphold the public cause,
And bless our isle:
Home of the brave and free,
Thou land of liberty,
We pray that still on thee
Kind heaven may smile.

Nor on this land alone,
But be God's mercies known
From shore to shore:
Lord make the nations see
That men should brothers be,
And form one family
The wide world o'er.[1]

Another *New National Anthem* is Sir William Watson's, published about 1894. Its opening stanza is as follows:

God save our ancient land,
God bless our noble land,
God save our land!
Yea, from war's pangs and fears,
Plague's tooth and famine's tears,
Ev'n unto latest years
God save our land!

And still another is James Elroy Flecker's (1915), which begins:

[1] There are two American hymns in the same metre and having the same first line as this (earlier) British one—whence occasional confusion.

God save our gracious King,
Nation and State and King,
God save the King!
Grant him the Peace divine,
But if his Wars be Thine
Flash on our fighting-line,
Victory's Wing!

Why have these 'New National Anthems' never really 'taken hold?' Probably Quiller-Couch, in discussing Watson's, has made the right guess:

'Americans may be content with:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing.[1]

And let us, too, by all means sing of our sweet land of liberty, but without collaring a tune which by prescription belongs to our monarch. This seems to me the fatal defect of Mr. Watson's *New National Anthem*.'

In other words, writers of 'New National Anthems' should avoid putting themselves into direct competition with the old one: if they can find a composer to make them a good enough tune they may possibly succeed in getting into use an additional anthem,[2] but they cannot, at this time of day, supplant the old one by means of 'collaring its tune'.

Hymns and Hymn Tunes based on 'God save the King'

As has been mentioned, the metre of *God save the King* seems to have been an innovation. Once the tune had been popularized, however, that metre was widely adopted. Not only were parodies written to the tune in Britain, and loyal songs to it in continental countries, but hymn writers adopted sometimes the tune and sometimes merely the metre.

The earliest hymn to be modelled on *God save the King* retains the 'King' motive and its first stanza is a frank imitation of the original. It is that hymn of unknown authorship that is still sung to-day.

[1] See page 57.

[2] As Blake did when, ninety years after his death, he inspired Parry to set his *Jerusalem*.

Come, Thou Almighty King,
Help us Thy name to sing,
Help us to praise;
Father all glorious,
O'er all victorious,
Come and reign over us,
Antient of days.

The date is at least as early as 1757, for from that year it is found bound in with George Whitefield's Collection in copies in the British Museum. From 1761 it is actually printed as an integral page of the Collection, and in the same year it appears in the American Colonies in Lyon's *Urania, or a Choice Collection of Psalm Tunes, Anthems and Hymns*, where it is set to the *God save the King* tune.

In 1769 it acquired a fine tune of its own, that one by the popular London violinist-composer, Giardini, which is still found in many hymn-tune books—generally under the title *Italian Hymn* (from the country of its composer's birth) or *Moscow* (from the city of his death). This tune first appeared in a music edition of what is usually known as 'the Lock Hospital Collection'.

Another early hymn in the same metre (and probably to the *God save the King* tune) is James Allen's *Glory to God on High*, of 1761, still to be seen in many hymn books.

A cursory glance through a few hymn books will reveal many later hymns in the *God save the King* metre (the present author recently found a dozen in a search of a few minutes) and many tunes wedded to them (of these, on the same occasion, he noted eighteen, some of the hymns having two tunes as alternatives). The best of all these tunes seemed to him to be one by his friend, the late Sir Richard Terry, called *Doxford*.

A Hymn of Convivial Peace

Not exactly a normal hymn, but admirable in its sentiments, is a production dated by the British Museum authorities as '1760?' It is intended for singing at convivial gatherings and is entitled *Mirth and Friendship . . . intended to Promote Love, Unity, Peace and Concord amongst Friends—very Proper to be Sung at the Conclusion of any Publick or Private Company*. It is to be sung to the tune of *God save the King*. The first and last stanzas run:

May this good Company,
In Love and Harmony,
Always agree.

May all Disturbance cease,
Friendship and Love increase;
If we but Live in Peace,
Happy are we.

Let us what e'er we do,
Friendship and Love pursue;
Let Discord cease.
Let no one take delight
Either to Scold or Fight;
Let us Conclude this Night
With Joy and Peace.

Translations into Other Languages

From the late eighteenth century onwards *God save the King* has been often translated, and the present author has, in his larger book, reproduced versions in Latin, Greek, Italian, German (an excellent version, for Beethoven's use in his arrangement of the tune), French, Gaelic and Welsh, and he has given particulars of a number of translations into Indian dialects, and recorded amusing controversies concerning these and also concerning attempts at adaptation of the tune to assimilate it to the scales of various parts of India.

A former British resident in Bangkok offers the interesting information that when, as happened occasionally, a British vocalist came there in the course of a professional tour amongst the European residents of the Far East it was usual to instruct him as to the necessity of closing his concert by a solo performance of the Siamese National Anthem, which, as he was informed, presents little difficulty since it is set to the same tune as the British one. The words, as supplied to him began:

O wa ta na Siam,
O wa ta na Siam,
O wa ta nas!

How the Anthem proceeds this informant is unable to say, as on all the occasions when he was present the loudly expressed approval of the audience at this point brought the performance to an end.

Continental Countries adopt the British Tune

God save the King, as we have seen, began its eighteenth century

public career as a popular song of theatre and street. We have found that by about 1747 or 1748, it appears to have become customary to greet the King with it as he entered a place of public amusement (p. 26). When the description of it as 'National Anthem' was first adopted it is difficult to say, but as late as 1825 we note one writer speaking of that description as 'a modern custom' (p. 30).

However, though the title 'National Anthem' was not used for perhaps sixty to seventy years after the song's first popularization by the London theatres in 1745, it had almost from the outset been that very thing.

Continental visitors to Britain were no doubt struck with the popularity of the words and tune, and realized the social and political advantage to a country of possessing such a recognized musical symbol.

In 1763, eighteen years after the tune's popularization in Britain, it appeared in Holland, under the Dutch title *D'Ongeveinsdheid* ('Sincerity'), in a publication presumably connected with Freemasonry since it bore the French title, *La Lire Maçonne*: the tune was frankly offered as a British one and, indeed, the English title *God save the King* was attached to it.

The next continental acclimatization of the tune was in Denmark, twenty-seven years later still. One Heinrich H. Harries brought out in a newspaper he edited, the *Flensburger Wochenblatt* (27 January 1790), a poem for the birthday of Christian VII, with the intimation that it was to be sung to the melody of the British *God save great George, the King*—which seems to show that the tune had already become known in Denmark.

Four years later (1794) a German newspaper provided a set of verses modelled on those of Denmark, and, indeed, an adaptation of them, *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz* ('Hail, thou with Victor's Wreath'). The author of these verses was B. G. Schumacher. The first stanza ran:

Heil Dir im Siegerkranz,
Herrscher des Vaterlands,
Heil König Dir!
Fühl in des Thrones Glanz,
Die hohe Wonne ganz
Liebling des Volkszu sein.
Heil König Dir!

This song seems to have been almost at once officially adopted by Prussia, Saxony, Hanover, Brunswick, and Weimar (perhaps also by other German states). So well did it become known that not only

words but tune were soon taken by many to be of native German origin; thus cases are on record of Germans on arriving in Britain, and hearing the tune played, innocently assuming that this was being done in their personal honour.[1]

Some time later Russia adopted the tune, to words written for it, and it remained in use for state occasions of every kind until, in 1833, Alexis Lvof, on official instructions, composed a new national anthem, *God preserve the Czar.*

Switzerland possesses no official National Anthem, but the British tune has long been in wide use, being sung in the German-speaking cantons to a poem, *Rufst du, mein Vaterland?* and in the French-speaking cantons to another, *O monts indépendants.*

Adjoining Switzerland the little principality of Liechtenstein uses the tune for its *Liechtensteinsvolkshymne.*

Sweden, at one period, also used the tune as that of a national song.

Altogether, it is said, about twenty states have, at one period or another, used the British tune as that of official national anthems or songs amounting to such.

It will be realized that the whole idea of what we call a 'national anthem' arose out of the astonishing popular success of *God save the King* and that as other nations adopted the idea they, apparently as a matter of course, adopted with it the British tune: indeed, we may say, for some time the term 'national anthem', if that term had been in use, would have meant a loyal or patriotic song of a nation sung to the tune which forms the subject of this book.

From the date when the various German states began to acquire national anthems it would appear likely that they did so under the influence of a reaction against the French Revolution. Note that the execution of the King of France in 1793 was followed by the publication of *Heil Dir im Siegerkranz* in 1794, this then being adopted by a number of German states in honour of their respective monarchs. And that two years later, when Bonaparte's successful campaign in Italy was in progress, Haydn's *Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser* appeared. Haydn's composition of his fine tune was, as is well known, inspired by his admiration of *God save the King*, with which he had become familiar in England, from his second visit to which country he had just returned.

These were times when there was an obvious high practical value in the possession of a national musical symbol, such as could become

[1] After the Franco-German War of 1870 a new poem of United Germany was set to the same tune, *Brause, du Freiheitssang*—'Roar out, thou Freedom-song'.

the common property of the whole community—of all classes and all ages.

The Tune in the United States

American colonists of British birth or descent naturally soon made acquaintance with a loyal song that was, in 1745 and after, reproduced in so many publications, all of which were probably imported, in smaller or larger quantities, into America. In 1761 we find the tune in print in Lyon's *Urania* (see p. 53), with the words of a hymn. With its original loyal words it is found announced as to end theatrical performances and concerts at Philadelphia and New York during the 1760's, just as it often ended such entertainments in London.

In 1776 came the Declaration of Independence and the tune, perforce, went republican, being set to poems such as *God save America, God save the President, God save Great Washington, God save the Thirteen States,* and so forth. In 1795 it even went Suffragist:

God save each Female's right;
Show to her ravished sight
Woman is free.

There are ten stanzas in that strain. Surely an early example of such sentiments!

Then in 1831[1] there was introduced the admirable national song which is still known to every American schoolchild and still sung to the *God save the King* tune:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty—
Of thee I sing.
Land, where my fathers died;
Land of the pilgrim's pride;
From every mountain-side,
Let freedom ring.

The interesting story of the composition and first performance of this poem of Rev. Samuel Francis Smith is too long to tell in the present small volume.

(It is said that Dickens, attending a public gathering in Philadelphia in 1862 and hearing this song struck up, took it to be a compliment

[1] Always until recently stated as 1832, so that the 1932 Centenary Celebration ordered by Congress was really a year too late.

to the country he represented and sprang to his feet—which action the audience, on their part, understood as a compliment to *their* country and acknowledged by imitation. Thus both parties were pleased!)

By a coincidence there appeared almost simultaneously with Smith's poem above mentioned one by a Massachusetts theological student, C. T. Brooks. It began:

God bless our native land:
Firm may she ever stand
  Through storm and night!
When the wild tempests rave,
Ruler of wind and wave,
Father Eternal save
  Us by thy might.

Another version of this was produced in 1844 by Rev. John Sullivan Dwight, and other variants are to be found in American hymn books of the past century.

(For the confusion between this poem and a British one opening similarly see p. 51.)

An American Parody

At the time of the American Civil War (1861), a humorous-malicious parody was written by an amateur poet of the Northern States who objected to the sympathy that many British people and newspapers were showing for the South. Two of its stanzas run:

God save me, great John Bull!
Long keep my pocket full!
  God save John Bull!
Ever victorious,
Haughty, vain-glorious,
Snobbish, censorious,
  God save John Bull!

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On me, me only pour,
  Me, great John Bull!
Maintain oppressive laws,
Frown down the poor man's cause!
So sing with heart and voice,
  I, great John Bull.

'God save the King's' First Performance in Soviet Russia

At the moment when this book is written there is special interest in recalling what was certainly the Soviet's initial performance of the British National Anthem—which has later, we may surmise, been often performed there. (It will be remembered, by the way, that there was a period when the same tune was also that of the Russian National Anthem; see p. 56.)

In 1935 the Rt. Hon. Anthony Eden, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, was in Moscow. *The Daily Telegraph* of 30 March reported of the proceedings the previous evening:

> The British National Anthem was played with all standing when Mr. Eden entered the former Imperial box in the Grand State Opera House to-night to see the ballet *Le Lac des Cygnes*. The British Minister was cheered for several minutes. . . .
>
> The Red hymn, *The International*, was thundered out by the orchestra immediately after *God save the King*. . . . The great gilt and red plush opera house, bigger than any London theatre, was crowded to the roof with Russian and foreign enthusiasts. This brilliant scene, rare in the Soviet capital, brought to a close a day of considerable diplomatic activity.

'God save the King' in Occupied France

With the Germans in control of France in 1940 *God save the King* took on, with the French, a new significance. The American writer, Polly Peabody, whose *Occupied Territory* (1941) recounts an adventurous journey from Norway to Russia and thence to France, where as a neutral she was able to move about pretty freely, tells how she got to Brittany and stayed in a cottage with her old nurse and the nurse's husband and family. A British air raid began, and the thought of these peasants was not for their own safety but for the success of the raiders:

> 'Hooray! Hooray! for the Royal Air Force,' they cried. 'Go on! Hit them hard! Bomb them to blazes.'
>
> The youngest boy grabbed a frying pan and spoon and went sailing round

the kitchen table, beating it like a drum. . . . We stood around the table and sang *The Marseillaise* and *God save the King*.

And that is how many of those who dwell along the northern coast of France live through the British raids, which for them must bring either death or freedom, without which life is not worth living![1]

And in a broadcast on 16 November 1941 a British soldier named Riley, telling of his escape from France, recounted how in one village, tired out by his adventurous journey, he slept in a hayloft whilst the villagers took turns to keep watch for him, and then, in the morning, before setting him on his way, asked him to repay them by singing *God save the King*.

[1] On the attitude of the population of the Occupied Countries during an air raid compare William Shirer's *Berlin Diary; the Journal of a Foreign Correspondent*, 1934-41—'The thing I'll never forget about these coastal towns in Belgium and France is the way the Belgians and French pray every night for the British bombers to come over, though often when their prayers are answered it means their death and often they cheer the bomb which kills them.'

IV

THE COMPOSERS AND 'GOD SAVE THE KING'

Whatever may be thought of the words of *God save the King* there is a sufficient testimony to the musical value of its simple, strong melody in the extensive treatment of it by composers. The following is an attempted list.[1]

1. SETS OF VARIATIONS, FANTASIAS, ETC.

PIANO SOLO: John Christian Bach (posthumously published; authorship not quite certain), Beethoven, F. Beyer, J. F. Burrowes, J. Calkin (waltz dedicated to Queen Victoria), C. Chaulieu, P. Cianchettini, J. B. Cramer, J. T. Craven, Czerny (five pieces based on the tune), Dussek, Forkel, G. F. Harris, Herz, L. Janssen, Kalkbrenner, Kuhe, Liszt, J. Major, Pixis, Brinley Richards, Carl Schramm (for left hand only), Thorley, Vogler, E. J. Westrop.

PIANO DUET: Hünten, J. A. Moralt, Elizabeth Stirling.

VIOLIN SOLO (with orchestral accompaniment): Paganini.

VIOLIN DUET (unaccompanied): Alday.

FLUTE: Drouet, C. N. Weiss.

HARP: Bochsa, J. B. Chatterton, Graille.

GUITAR: J. Kreutzer.

ORGAN: Best (he provided also a 3-stanza arrangement, without actual variations), Chipp, G. French Flowers, Hesse, F. James, de Lange, Matthison-Hansen, Pearce, Reger, Rinck, Gordon Saunders, Volkmar, S. S. Wesley, F. C. Woods.

ORCHESTRA: Glazounof (also arranged for two pianos), P. Musard (Quadrilles).

ORGAN DUET: Paul Janssen.

STRING QUARTET: Onslow (slow movement in one of his quartets, of which, also there exists an organ arrangement by J. Banister).

MILITARY BAND: Duchess of Kent (Queen Victoria's Mother).

2. COMPOSITIONS IN WHICH THE TUNE IS INTRODUCED

ORCHESTRA: Attwood (introduction to Coronation Anthem), Beethoven (in *Battle of Vittoria*), Brahms (in *Triumphlied*), Lindpainter (*Ouverture Guerrière*), Glazounov (in *Paraphrase on the National Hymns of the Allied Nations;* 1916), Maxson (in *Liberty Fantasia*), Meyerbeer (in *Das Feldlager in Schlesien*—in one of *Tableaux vivants* at end, and also in *Overture in Form of a March*), Spontini, Sullivan (in Ballet, *Victoria and Merrie England*), Weber (in *Jubilee Overture* and also in Cantata, *Battle and Victory*), Haydn Wood (in *Homage March*).

[1] The author will be glad to hear of any instances he may have overlooked.

ORGAN AND THREE TROMBONES: Gounod (in *Wedding March for the Du' Albany*).

CHORAL WORKS: Myles B. Foster (in anthem, *My Heart is Inditing*), F. G. Monk (in cantata, *The Bard*), John Stafford Smith (in glee), Verdi (in *Hymn of the Nations*), S. Webbe sen. (in 2 glees), E. Roberts West (in Anthem, *The King shall rejoice*).

There are also many battle pieces for piano by very minor composers, introducing the tune (e.g. Kotzwara's *Battle of Prague*).

3. PERFORMING ARRANGEMENTS
(for various media)

H. E. Adkins, Arne, Bantock (3), Barnby (2), J. Barnett, Battishill, Beethoven, Bengough, Bishop, Brewer, J. F. Bridge, J. C. Bridge, Burney (lost), Callcott, Cleland, Conyers, Costa, Cummings, Walford Davies, Dupuis, Elgar, Elvey, H. Farmer, Flesher, Balfour Gardiner, G. Gardner, J. T. Gardner, Goss, H. Hiles, Horsley, Hullah, L. Janssen, Kemp, Lanza, Chas. Macpherson, Ernest Macmillan, Meyerbeer, V. Novello, Pearsall, H. Pierce, H. W. Pierce, Purday, Reay, Rimbault, Rodwell, Varley Roberts, Sydney Russell, Saint-Saëns, Salmon, Kennedy Scott (2), Martin Shaw, Stanford (2), Stevenson, E. H. F. Taylor, Turle, Viner, Warrell, S. Webbe, junr., Weber (2), E. Roberts West, John E. West, Westwood, W. B. Williams, F. E. Wilson, H. J. Wood, 'W.S.' (probably Shield).

The number of composers mentioned above amounts to about one hundred and forty. Almost all the works mentioned have been published. A number of other treatments have been performed but not published.

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