

**NATIONAL HYMNS: HOW THEY
ARE WRITTEN AND HOW THEY
ARE NOT WRITTEN. A LYRIC AND
NATIONAL STUDY FOR THE TIMES**

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National Hymns: How They are Written and how They are Not Written. A Lyric and National Study for the Times by Richard Grant White

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RICHARD GRANT WHITE

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FAIT, DE LA ROCHE, Finst.

A. B. JOHNSON, Repts.

NATIONAL HYMNS

HOW THEY ARE WRITTEN AND HOW THEY ARE NOT
WRITTEN

A LYRIC AND NATIONAL STUDY FOR THE TIMES

WITH A LETTER TO THE SATURDAY REVIEW.

By
RICHARD GRANT WHITE



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MOSES H. GRINNELL,

THE SLIGHT TOKEN

OF ADMIRATION OF HIS ABILITIES, OF HONOR FOR HIS PATRIOTISM,

AND OF HIGH PERSONAL REGARD.

WOR 19 FEB '36



THE Committee upon a National Hymn placed some of the "most meritorious" and otherwise "noticeable" songs received by them in the hands of Messrs. Rudd & Carleton for publication under my editorial care. There were very few of these—not thirty, all told; and those which were remarkable for lyric excellence were gradually so reduced in numbers by the withdrawal of manuscripts by their authors, that after a while the original project was abandoned.

Of all the motives which may have induced a withdrawal of consent to publication, or a withholding of it where it was reasonably expected, it is not necessary, or, indeed, proper, here to speak. Upon such a point every author has not only the right of deciding for himself, but of doing so unquestioned. It is proper, however, to say that in some instances consent to publication was refused owing to the disposition shown by many competitors to make themselves disagreeable, and to say as many unpleasant things as their ingenuity could devise about the committee and its doings. As some, though

by no means all, of the best songs were written by authors of reputation, it was natural that a part of these, at least, should shrink from exposure to the threatened consequences. One of them remarked, "If I were at the beginning of my career, I should not mind such talk; but as it is plain that everything ill-natured that can be said is to be said, I had rather not put myself into such a pillory." It is right also to add that this pitiful conduct was exhibited invariably by those competitors who had no claim whatever to special consideration. Certain of the hymns which would otherwise have been published were withdrawn by their authors in a very courteous and good-natured manner; but the people who fumed and fretted, who wearied the members of the committee with calls and letters of remonstrance and inquiry, who waylaid them in the streets, who entered the office of the publishers big with bombast and terrible with threats—some, if their verses were published, some, if they were not—were invariably those whose manuscripts had fallen on the first reading dead into the waste basket, leaving not even a trace behind them in the memory to aid a guess at what their incensed authors were raving about.

But although the notion of publishing the projected volume was therefore given up, it was afterwards thought by some of those who had been interested in the undertaking that some discussion of the subject of national hymns, with an account of the origin and proceedings of the committee in question, illustrated by songs selected in part from those which had been left at the disposal of the committee would be acceptable to many persons; and therefore I have given a few days to the preparation of this little book. For it I only am

J. N. V.