

The word "gracious" which is in use to-day apparently crept in because "William" (King William IV.) would not scan. Curious but vain were the efforts made to fit it in. The first line, as we know it now, seems not to have appeared before June, 1830. Seven years later, on the accession of Queen Victoria, the peculiar appropriateness of the epithet "gracious" to the young sovereign doubtless fixed the usage. Indeed it may be said that it is from Queen Victoria's coronation that the anthem with the feminine name became truly national. From that day to the present it has been sung by great choirs to the accompaniment of grand organs, full orchestras and massed bands, and by the multitudinous throats of the British people.

This, in outline, is, as far as may be determined, the history of our National Anthem. Its history wonderfully illustrates the spirit of caution and compromise that marks the English race. Instead of striking out on some new line they take something that lies to their hand and make the necessary adaptations to circumstances. At one time it is sung in the interest of King James I. against the Gunpowder plotters; again it is sung in the interest of James II. against William of Orange; again, it is sung as the battle song of the Hanoverians against Jacobite plotters and pretenders; and now at last, it is the voice of the deepest patriotic sentiment of our world-wide commonwealth.

There is another interesting point to which I would draw your attention when you read the words of the Anthem. The first verse originated in days when the doctrine of the divine right of kings was stoutly held. It is a prayer for the King couched in the strongest and most fervid forms. To-day we interpret it in a more constitutional and democratic sense, and we regard the King as the embodiment of the unity and justice of our whole Empire. The third verse had its origin in the days of the constitutional and limited monarchy of the Hanoverians. In it you do not pray