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**Uncle Sam Can't Get  
Tongue Around Hymn**

American Writer Points Out the Difficulties of  
Enunciating "Star-Spangled Banner," and Con-  
trasts It With Cohan's Rippy-Raggy "Over There."

Many people have remarked the shame-faced way in which the great American people, now that the United States is at war, try—and fail—to sing their national anthem. It has been admitted that no one knows the words. But the result is equally inarticulate when the words are printed on the program. Aleister Crowley, in the current issue of "Vanity Fair," offers a saner explanation. His view of the rationale of the matter follows:

"America has a tremendous tune—one of the most stirring ever written. (Now credited beyond doubt to John Stafford Smith, Gloucester, 1750, London 1802,—a melody well known in this country during Revolutionary days, when various texts were sung to it.) But Francis Scott Key (September 14, 1814) quote in the then highly popular lilt of 'Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?' and he spoiled the whole thing—by putting in a long syllable where he most needed a short one.

" 'O, say can you see by the dawn's early light' is all tight but for 'dawn's early light' would go perfectly. This is not a very bad place; an effort will take you over it; but worse follows. 'Whose broad stripes and bright stars' is six long syllables. Whose stripes and whose stars is a little better; but the 'whose' is always too long; especially before a double or triple consonant. Sing it 'O standard of stars' or 'O banner of stars' and there would be no difficulty.

"Again, the Mne ending 'half conceals, half discloses' asks too much of the breath. You have to sing '—seals, half discl' in the same time as you take to sing 'daintily.'

" 'As it blows, covers up or discloses' is a good deal easier.

"What a swollen tongue feeling one gets in trying to sing even "Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps' pollu-

tion.' Always the same trouble of too many consonants. Try 'The boss has amended the bad resolution and it might be appointed for use in Tammany Hall as a Democratic rallying song.

"Something of the sort occurs in nearly every line of this blessed hymn of our, but the best choral steeplechaser ever foaled is bound to come down over the Heaven-rescued land fence. 'Vnr' and 'dl' are not happy combinations for the people who objected to the Russian offensive because it obliged them to try to wait for a commission from the President to set this whole jumble right. Quite enough now for us to amend the sound without attention to the sense!

"Observe that even 'star-spangled' itself is a little difficult, especially before 'banner.' 'Rsp' and 'ngl' and 'db' constitute a formidable network of barbed wire entanglements for most voices. 'Star-bestrewn' would be a little better, but not much. ("Spangled' is a dreadfully tinselly word, suggesting a circus, anyhow.) Probably there isn't a perfect word with the desired meaning: English is horribly deficient in 'short' syllables."

Mr. Crowley concludes by calling attention to the contemporary recruiting song, "Over There," by that "really great poet, George M. Cohan." This achievement, which follows, Mr. Crowley is pleased to hold up as "masterpiece," recently made by Miss Nora Bayes "an essential part of every cultivated New Yorker's home life":

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun;  
Take it on the run, on the run, on the run;  
Hear them calling you and me,  
Every son of liberty;  
Hurry right away, no delay, go today,  
Make your daddy glad, to have such a lad;  
Tell your sweetheart not to pine,  
To be proud her boy's in line.

Chorus.

Over there, over there,  
Send the word, send the word, over there;  
That the Yanks are coming, the Yanks are coming,  
The drums rum-tumming, ev'rywhere  
So prepare, say a pray'r,  
Send the word, send the word, to beware;  
We'll be over, we're coming over,  
And we won't come back till it's over,  
Over there, over there.

Johnnie get your gun, get your gun, get your gun;  
Johnnie show the Hun you're a son of a gun,  
Hoist the flag and let her fly,  
Yankee Doodle, do or die;  
Pack your little kit, show your grit, do your bit;  
Yankees, to the ranks, from the towns and the tanks;  
Make your mother proud of you, and the old Red, White  
and Blue.