

shouted, on the battlefields of South Africa; rose above the terror and cannon-fire of the Great War.

A SONG of somewhat misty beginnings is "Malbrunk s'en-va-t-en guerre." Perhaps you haven't heard of it. But you do know "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow"—the tunes are one and the same.

Supposedly the ditty was brought into Europe by one of the crusaders, and then vanished for five centuries. In 1781, it came to life again, when Marie Antoinette sang it to the little Dauphin as a lullaby. Paris learnt the melody, and it was soon on the air in every café. Even the great Napoleon, who had absolutely no ear for music, hummed the catchy refrain. When it crossed the English Channel, it passed into immortality.

AND so they go on—these songs of all the ages, as strong and vital now as they were 50 or a hundred years ago.

How is it they do not die? What distinguishes the "Auld Lang Syne" from the "Maytimes" or the "Yes, We Have No Bananas" of music? All the song publishers in the world would give their right hands to know.

For the "immortal" quality is as elusive as it is positive. To recognise it, you must understand not only music and rhythm, but the innermost heart of a nation.

Hymns to Live

SINGER EMERSON

(Continued from page 12.)

began singing as a boy of eight years old. In his Chicago apartment is a spinet piano. Here the family gathers while Emerson's 17-year-old daughter plays as her father sings—not dance tunes or swing, but hymns.

When Emerson went to college his hymns were part of his life. He sang them on Chataqua and Lyceum platforms during the summer. He went to Wall Street where he sold stocks and bonds, and still sang his hymns.

During the war he joined up as a naval aviator and later as flying instructor, and he sang in churches and privately for his friends.

AT this time he was a real estate agent in Miami. Miami boomed madly, burst badly. Emerson lost the million dollars he had made.

Ruined now, Emerson said to his wife: "I am going to earn my living as a singer of hymns."

HE began his radio career on the spot. He took his portfolio of hymns to the radio station in Miami and made his debut in 1929. He sang in New York. He learned of a programme vacancy in Cincinnati and asked for an audition.

The studio gave him a week to prove that his hymns would find an audience. One broadcast was enough. Letters poured in from thousands of ordinary people, from clergymen of all sects.

Seven years from the time he started in Miami his session became part of a regular programme on the U.S.A. network.

Emerson tells a story about his hymns. There is a little old lady whose sight has completely gone. For her he sings at her request, "Open My Eyes That I May See."

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