

"THE FLAG"

Address Before Charlottetown Rotary Club
By Major C. C. Thompson, M. C. V. D.

The following paper was given before the Charlottetown Rotary Club by Major C. C. Thompson, M. C. V. D.

President and Fellow Rotarians: When you asked me if I would address the Club on "THE FLAG," I hesitated for a moment, and then I accepted the request. I felt that I could not discuss such a subject as the justice it demanded.

What is this Flag of England?—The Flag that has braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze? It is only an old bit of Bunting, and only an old coloured Rag, and yet thousands have died for its honour, and shed their best blood for The Flag.

Were one to enquire of the average man of the street, I think he would be unable to tell us very much of the origin, history and correct use of the Flag, and what it really symbolizes.

How many of us know why the senior officer of a British war-ship is called the Captain? Why is it permissible for the officers of a British ship to sit while they drink the toast to His Gracious Majesty? Or why do sailors of His Majesty's fleet wear three rows of narrow white ribbon on the collar of their jackets, as well as the traditional black handkerchief around their necks? No doubt, a number of you gentlemen, know the traditions on which these are based, but I believe a great number of us do not. And with the Flag.

Therefore, what could be more fitting, particularly at this critical time in the history of our mighty Empire—that Empire on which the sun never sets—but that we for a short time today talk of our Flag, its origin, its uses, and what it exemplifies. In 1923 the Canadian Advisory Committee to Rotary International convened at Ottawa, the matter of a better general understanding of the meaning of the Union Jack was considered advisable, and also the proper manner in which it should be displayed.

Fred C. Palmer, in an excellent paper entitled, "The Story of the Union Jack," says in part: "The dictionary defines a 'flag' as a piece of bunting. It is also defined as a soldier's garment, but the feeling of reverence and sentiment which attaches to our national emblem, grants a more appropriate meaning, and the following may be said to express more adequately what our Union Jack means to us: 'The Flag' is a piece of bunting lifted in the air, and it speaks sublimely and every word has a voice. This is remarkably true of our British Flag. To seek its history is to hear the voices of the past, and realize the sublime motives which have made the British Empire the Commonwealth of nations fit today.

Flags, according to history, are as old as civilization. The earliest existence of flags and national emblems before history had a written record.

We read in the Bible of the Standards of the Assyrians; and in the Book of Numbers, second chapter, and verse, we read an order from God to the Children of Israel while they were on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land. He says "Every man of

the Children of Israel shall pitch by his own Standard with the Ensign of his father's house."

Our Museums hold emblems and standards of the Pharaohs, and also emblems of the Greeks and Romans of later times. But the oldest and only universal flag, from which all flags and emblems originated and which periodically we see, lifted in the air, higher than earthly flag staff can raise it, and spread out beyond the size of earthly bunting, and with colours which defy correct imitation by man, is the Rainbow—that emblem between God and Man.

Every nation has a Flag, whether Monarchy, Limited Monarchy, Republic or Soviet, and to all national flags respect is due from other nations. If all the flags of the nations of the world were placed side by side, one could point to the Union Jack, the Union Flag of Great Britain and say: That Flag means more and stands for more than any other flag in the world, by reason of the fact that while many flags mark an epoch in the history of the nation, or represent a personage, or mark a great event in a nation, and many commemorate a revolution, the Union Jack records upon its folds the steady and progressive growth of a great nation; and by the union of the nations whose flags constitute the Union Jack, a system of constitutional government has been introduced which cannot be surpassed by any other country in the world.

This has been exemplified in the words of Franklin W. Lane, an American. In an address upon the entry of America into the Great War in 1917, he said:

"Why do we fight? Because of England from whence came the laws, the traditions, the inherent love of liberty which we today call Anglo-Saxon civilization." Those words from a prominent American citizen carry more weight in the valuation of our British Empire than any words of ours.

The flags of the nations, which united form the Union Jack, are the Saint George's Cross of England, the Saint Andrew's Cross of Scotland, and the Saint Patrick's Cross of Ireland.

The origin of the Union Jack stretches far back into history. When Richard I. came back to England from the Crusades in the Twelfth Century, he introduced the Cross of St. George, and made it the battle flag of the country. As time passed, St. George was recognized as the patron saint of England. We are all familiar with the mythical story of his fight with the dragon. In 1222, a decree of the Council of Oxford, made his festival a national one, and "SAINT GEORGE AND MERRIE ENGLAND" was taken as a battle cry.

For over three hundred years our forefathers fought for this flag by land and sea. Drake, Raleigh, Fro-bisher, Hawkins and Howard won imperishable fame under it.

"They died, but the Flag of England blew free, ere the spirit passed."

The origin of the name "Jack" has received several explanations. The terms was first used in the Royal Navy. Some say it comes from the signature of King James I., as he signed his name in French or Latin, Jacques or Jacobus. The explanation most commonly accepted, however, is that the Flag of England while in

use previously was only generally accepted as such in 1274, in the reign of Edward I. It was the custom, according to tradition, to hoist one of these jackets on a lance or staff in order that the nationality of those on board the ship might be recognized. Later, a flag of white showing the red Cross of St. George, was made for this purpose, and called the "English Jack." On a naval ship the flag is flown from the staff known as the "Jack."

The Scottish Flag or Cross of St. Andrew is quite as significant, and equally rich in tradition and history. The white saltire on a blue background, according to tradition, was first seen when Achaus, King of the Scots, adopted it for the Flag of Scotland. On the eve of battle, while he prayed to God and St. Andrew for victory, the Cross of St. Andrew appeared in white clouds against the deep blue of the sky; hence, the choice of colours.

In 1606, three years after the two kingdoms of England and Scotland were united under one head, the King's Flag, or Union Flag, also called "The Additional Jack" was designed. It was flown in addition to the respective flags of England and Scotland to indicate the common sovereignty. The diagonal cross of St. Andrew on a blue field, was added to the English Jack, a white margin being left around the red cross to indicate the white field of the original St. George flag.

The Irish Flag—St. Patrick's Cross—was originally thought to have been derived from the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, χ , has been used, according to tradition, as far back as 411 A. D., although not formally recognized as the national emblem till about 1690.

In the forty-first year of the reign of George III the Parliament of Ireland was united with that of England and Scotland, and by Royal proclamation George III caused the Union Jack to be designed as we now have it, by the addition of the red saltire of St. Patrick to the Union Flag of James I.

Now, let us look at the picture of the Union Jack. Around the edge of the cross of St. George you see a narrow white fimbria, which in heraldry is the name for a border. This white border means that the white field or background of the original simple battle-flag of England, has been kept. It also makes the colour scheme of the Jack obey the rule of heraldry, which prescribes against one colour's touching upon another.

It is of particular importance to notice that when properly hoisted, the broad white cross of St. Andrew is uppermost in the quarters next the staff. In the order of the inclusion of the countries in the Union, it is historically inaccurate to have the Jack either constructed otherwise, or flown upside down.

Do not dip the flag to any person or thing. This honour may be shown by regimental colours or yacht club flags.

It should be displayed only between sunrise and sunset. Never allow our Flag to touch the ground or trail in the water. Remember this when lowering.

readily be seen why the top of a flag-staff should not be ornamented with a slender stem and gilded ball. It makes the flag when flown therefrom appear to be half-masted because of the space between the Flag and the masthead or ball.

When carried in procession, our Flag should be carried on the marching right.

When the Flag is used in connection with the unveiling of a monument, it should be run to the top of the staff and left flying, rather than dropped to the ground to disclose the statue.

Do not place any other flag above our Flag. It is not a compliment to any nation to place the flag of that nation above ours. It merely indicates lack of good taste.

When a flag is displayed in a church, it should be on a staff, and placed at the congregation's right as they face the pulpit. If on the platform, it should be at the minister's right as he faces the congregation.

When flags are displayed against a wall, (etc.) make sure that the flags are in such position that if a mast or staff were used, the staff would be at the flag's right, or the mast-head at the flag's right.

Observe the same care when placing a flag above a speaker's platform. The Flag should be used undraped and behind the speaker. Never use the Flag as a table cover. For merely decorative or utility purposes, use suitable bunting.

The Red Ensign with the "Jack" in the corner should never be flown, on land as it is purely a Mercantile Marine Flag. The White Ensign should never be flown except on a ship of war or at a naval office.

The Blue Ensign is never flown except on ships or boats belonging to the Government, or on yachts, entitled to by Royal warrant to use the word "Royal."

When flags of two or more nations are displayed, they should be from separate staffs of the same height. The flags should be of the same size. International use forbids the placing of one flag higher than another in peace time.

When several flags are carried abreast, the Union Jack should be in front of the centre of the line.

When troops with uncased colours are passing, spectators should stand at attention, and all boys should raise their hats.

Do not use the Flag as part of a costume, or as decoration on an athletic uniform. The beaver and the maple leaf lend themselves to this purpose. Do not print the Flag on paper napkins or boxes, or embroider it on cushions or handkerchiefs.

Do not put lettering on a flag, tack advertising to a flag-pole, or use the Flag for any advertising purpose. This is a very common fault in our city and in no other country is it permitted.

I am happy to be able to quote extracts from a little pamphlet written by Sir Joseph Pope K.C.M.G., where in speaking of the agitation that appears from time to time, regarding suggestions for the adoption of what is styled a Canadian Flag, he says in part:

"A national flag is the symbol of supreme authority and jurisdiction. Canada forms a portion of the Dominions of the King of England—as much so, His Majesty himself had declared, as does Surrey or Kent. How then could Canada consistently with her allegiance, fly any flag other than that which denotes British Sovereignty?"

Such men as Sir John A. Macdonald, Honourable Alexander MacKenzie, Sir George Cartier, Sir Wilfred Laurier and others, were entirely out of sympathy with any movement having for its object the substitution of any flag in Canada for that of the Union Jack.

As Sir John A. Macdonald on one occasion said:

"Under the folds of the Union Jack we enjoy the most ample liberty to govern ourselves as we please and at the same time we participate in the advantages which flow from association with the mightiest Empire the world has ever seen. Not only are we free to manage our domestic concerns, but, practically, we possess the privilege of making our own treaties with foreign countries, and, in our relations with the outside world we enjoy the prestige inspired by a consciousness of the fact that behind us towers the majesty of England."

How the foreigner must be impressed with the fact that no matter where he goes, one of the last sights that fades from his eye is the Union Jack, and upon his arrival in some other part of the world it is the first object he sees as he lands in the continent to which he is journeying!

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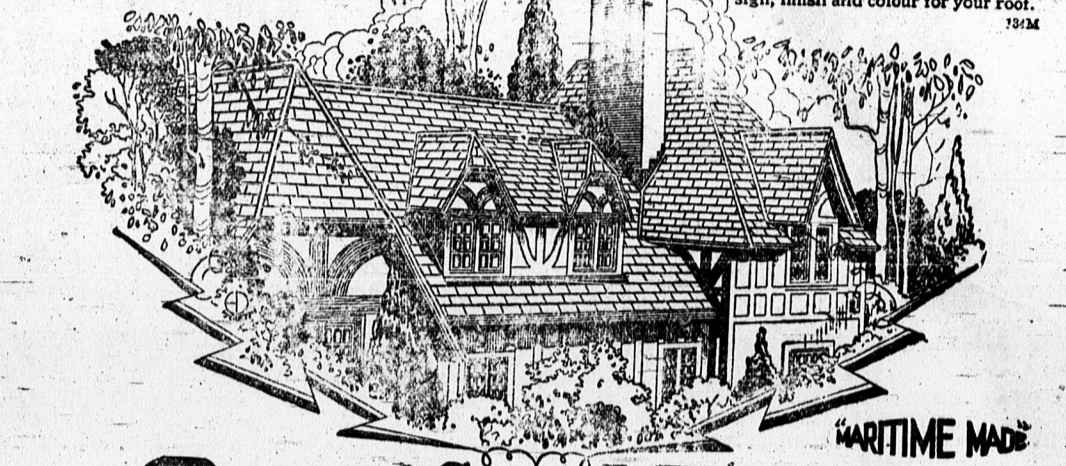
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lan \$1.67. Beneath its folds, Irishmen, Scotchmen and Englishmen have fought and died for its honour on many a bloody field and shot-ridden ship. Today from every continent, and from every sea, it ceaselessly follows the march of the morning sun around the globe.

"The lean white bear hath seen it, in the long, long Arctic night. The musk-ox knows the Standard that flouts the Northern Light. Never was Isle so little, never was sea so lone, But o'er the scud and the palm tree, An English Flag was flown."

This is perhaps best exemplified in the case of a Scotchman by the name of Campbell, who was imprisoned by the King of Abyssinia at the time of the Armenian outrages many years ago. The following extract, with which no doubt you are all familiar, was delivered in the United States Senate by the late Senator Frye, in which he paid an eloquent tribute to Britain's greatness:

"I do not love Great Britain particularly, and could not give my assent to the marvellous eulogium upon Great Britain delivered here the day before yesterday. I admit the greatness of Great Britain; I admit she is the greatest power on earth, and the most magnificent power ever seen in the history of the world on the ocean, but I do not admit that she is the friend of the United States. But, Mr. President, I think that one of the grandest things in all the history of Great Britain is that she does protect her subjects everywhere, anywhere and under all circumstances. I do not wonder that the British subject loves his country."

"This little incident with which you are all familiar is a marvellous illustration of the protection which Great Britain gives to her subjects: 'The King of Abyssinia took a British subject named Campbell about twenty years ago, carried him up to the fortress of Magdala on the heights of a rocky mountain, and put him into a dungeon without cause assigned. It took Great Britain six months to find that out. Then Great Britain demanded his immediate release. King Theobold refused to release. In less than ten days after that refusal was received, 10,000 British soldiers, including 5,000 Sepoys, were on board ships of war and were sailing down the coast.

"When they reached the coast they disembarked, marched across that terrible country a distance of 700 miles under a burning sun, up the mountain, up to the very heights

in front of the frowning dungeon; then, gave battle, battered down the iron-gates and the stone wall, reached over into the dungeon and lifted out of it that one British subject, King Theobold killing himself with his own pistol. Then they carried him down the mountain, across the land, and put him on board the white winged ship and sped him to his home in safety. That cost Great Britain \$25,000,000 and made General Napier, Lord Napier of Magdala.

"That was a great thing for a great country to do—a country that has an eye that can see all across the ocean, all across the land, away up to the mountain height, and away down to the darksome dungeon, one subject of hers out of her 38,000,000 people, and then had an arm long enough to stretch across the same ocean, across the same land, up the same mountain height, down the same dungeon, and then let him out and carry him home to his own country and friends. In God's name who would not die for a country that will do that?"

Along the same lines let me quote an extract from a speech delivered a few short years ago by the American Consul stationed at Saint John, when replying to the toast "The President of the United States." He paid a particularly fine tribute to the British Navy, the Empire and the flag:

"It must be with great pride and comfort that British seamen, though they be buffeted by the African sirrcco, the icy blasts of the Antarctic, the blusters of the Australian coast, the gales of the Atlantic or wafted by the zephyrs of the Pacific, realized that wherever they sped, under any or all of the constellations, they were an important part of the grandest, most powerful and most enduring Empire of all time. He would consider it an honour to be a British seaman, and with that thought he honoured the guests very highly."

I would like to read to you extracts from the last letter to his mother, by Lieut. Edward Tennant, Lord Glenconner's son, and I am sure that you will admit that it is one of the finest spirited letters that was written during the War, and strikingly exemplifies love of country and of flag.

France, Sept. 20, 1918

"Tonight we go to the last trench we were in, and tomorrow or the next day we go over the top. Our brigade has suffered less than either of the two brigades in Friday's liff of the 15th, so we shall be in the

home the highest degree of weather and fire protection. For Brantford Asphalt Slates neither swell or shrink, split or chip, curl or bulge, rust or decay. Yet they cost no more.

You can entrust the safeguarding of your family and furnishings with perfect confidence to these handsome shingles. For summer and town homes—for schools, churches, and public buildings they are equally desirable—not only for their security but for their exceptional beauty and economy.

Write for copy of booklet "Beauty With Fire Protection"—an authoritative treatise on the proper type, design, finish and colour for your roof.

are to be tested. We ought to rejoice that we have lived for this hour all our lives. Obey orders and we may be saved let us die like Englishmen."

The men were paraded on deck, and after roll call began to sing while they waited for the ship to sink. The discipline maintained enabled the Navy to save all lives and once again they upheld—as expressed in the official Admiralty report—the cherished tradition of the Birkenhead.

As Ella Wheeler Wilcox said at the time of the sinking of the Titanic, in referring to the discipline on board the ship, with particular reference to an Englishman:

"He slams his door in the face of the world, He will even curse, but he opens his purse, To the poor, the sick and the old. He is slow in giving to woman the vote, And slow to pick up her fan, But he gives her room in an hour of doom, And dies like an Englishman."

Henry Newbolt, in his splendid poem entitled, "Drake's Drum," says:

"Take my drum to England, hang it by the shore, Strike it when your powder's running low; If the dawn sight Devon I'll quit the port of Heaven And drum them up the Channel, as we drummed them long ago."

Rupert Brooks was one of the most promising poets of his day, who gave his life for his country in the Great War. He expressed his love for the Flag when he wrote the stirring lines:

"If I should die, Think only—this of me, That there's some corner of a foreign field, That is forever England."

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

Come to the Carleton!

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