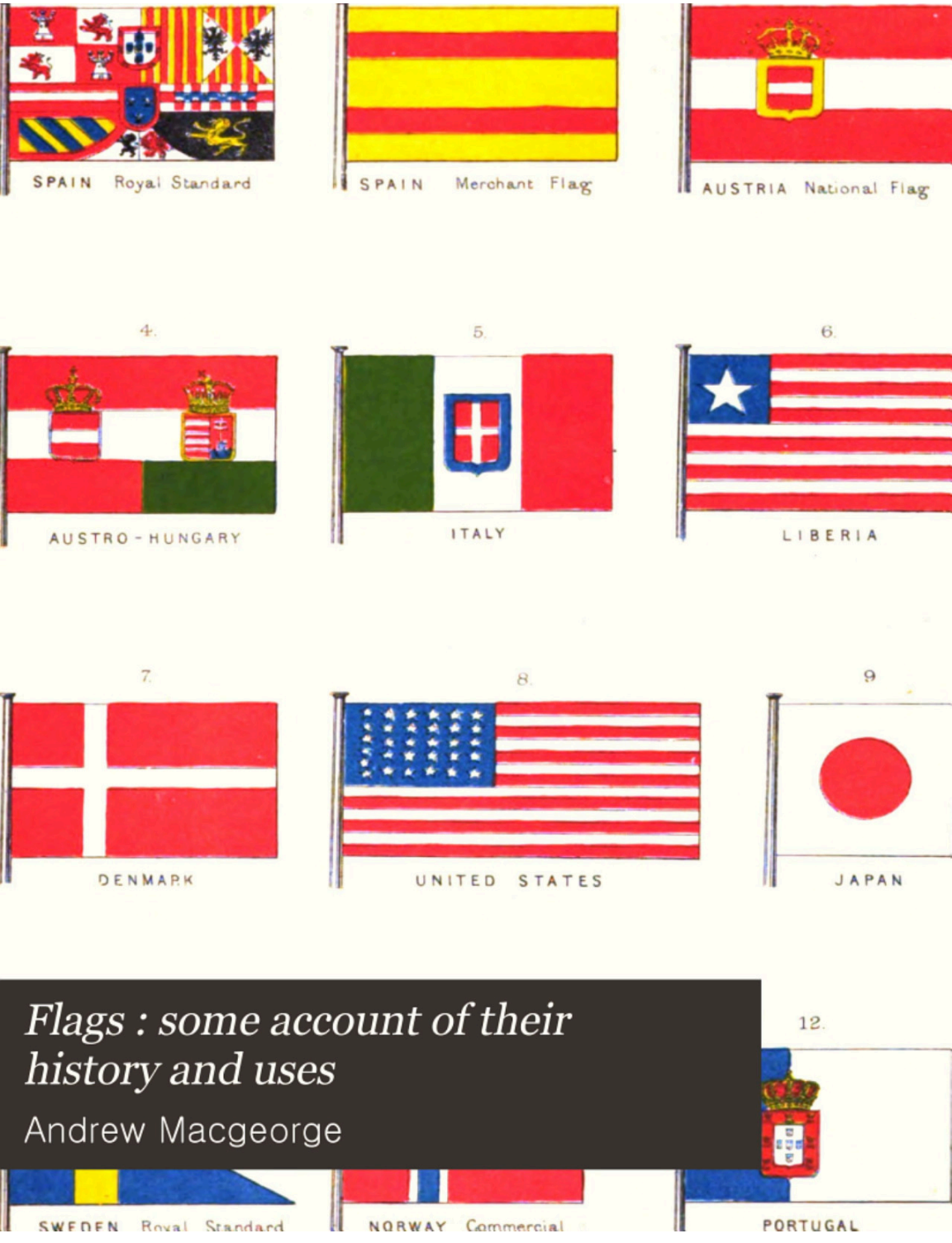


Flags : some account of their history and uses

Andrew Macgeorge

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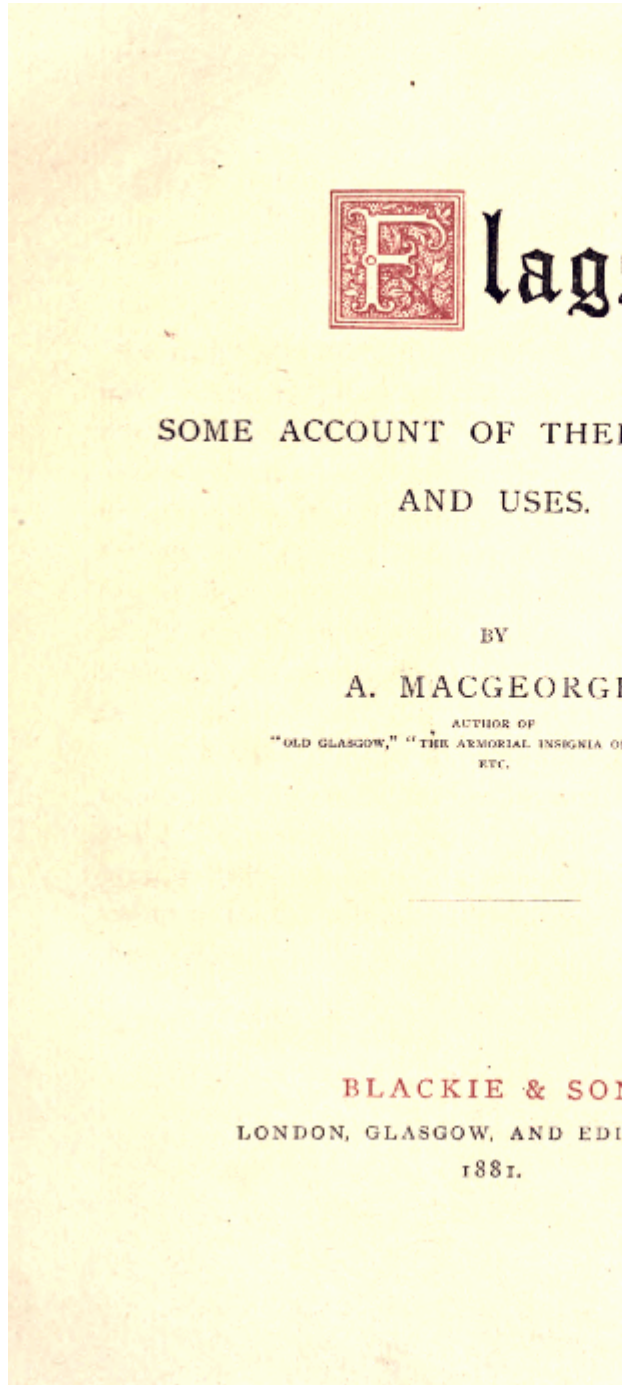
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Flags

SOME ACCOUNT OF THEI

AND USES.

BY

A. MACGEORGE

AUTHOR OF
"OLD GLASGOW," "THE ARMORIAL INSIGNIA OF
ETC.

BLACKIE & SON

LONDON, GLASGOW, AND EDI

1881.

PREFATORY NOTE.

IN a nation like ours, with a dominion so extended, and with communication by sea and land with all parts of the world, the flags under which ships sail and armies and navies fight, cannot be without interest. Yet there are few subjects in regard to which the means of information are less accessible. The object of the present volume is to give, in a popular form, some account of our own flags, and of those of other nations, ancient and modern, with some notices regarding the use of flags, in naval warfare and otherwise.

I have taken occasion to point out certain heraldic inaccuracies in the construction of our national flag, and also in the design on our bronze coinage. I shall be glad if what I have written be the means, by directing public attention to the subject, of effecting the correction of these errors.

A. M.

Glenarn, December, 1880.

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FLAGS.

On that morning when the news arrived from South Africa of the disaster at Isandlana, there was general mourning for the loss of so many brave men; but there was mourning also of a different kind,—with some perhaps even deeper—for the loss of the colours of the 24th Regiment. And yet, after all, it was only a bit of silk which had been lost, having on it certain devices and inscriptions—a thing of no intrinsic value, and which could be replaced at a cost merely nominal. But it possessed extrinsic qualities which could be measured by no money value, and every one felt that the loss was one to redeem which, or rather to redeem what that loss represented, demanded, if necessary, the putting forth of the strength of a great nation. And so, when it was found that the colours never had been really lost—that they

had been saved by brave men who had laid down their lives in defending them—there was throughout the nation a feeling of intense relief that national honour had been saved; a feeling of rejoicing far beyond what was evoked by the news of the capture of the Zulu king and the termination of the war. So at sea. In our great wars in which the navy of Great Britain played so prominent a part, we became so accustomed to see the flag of the enemy bent on under our own ensign, that if an exceptional case occurred where the position of the two flags was reversed, it went home to the heart of every loyal subject with a pang which the loss of many ships by storm and tempest would not have produced.

Yet how few of us know what the national colours are, what the Union is, what the Royal Standard is. Not to speak of civilians, are there many officers, in either the army or the navy, who, without a copy before them, could accurately construct or describe the flag of the nation under which they fight, or tell what its component parts represent? I doubt it. And, after all, they would not be so much without excuse, for even at the Horse Guards and the Admiralty, there is some confusion of ideas on the subject. I have before me "The Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army," issued by the Commander-in-chief, in which flags which can be flown only on shore are confounded with flags which can be flown nowhere but on board ship. Yet the subject is really an interesting one, and, connected as it is with national history, it is deserving of a little study.

Flags are of many kinds, and they are put to many uses. They are the representatives of nations; they distinguish armies and fleets, and to insult a flag is to insult the nation whose ensign it is. We see in flags,

says Carlyle, "the divine idea of duty, of heroic daring—in some instances of freedom and right." There are national flags, flags of departments, and personal flags; and as signals they are of the greatest value as a means of communication at sea.

ANCIENT STANDARDS.

It is chiefly of our own flags that I intend to speak, but it may be interesting to say something of those which were in use among the peoples of ancient history.

From the earliest times of which we have authentic records, standards or banners were borne by nations, and carried in battle. It was so in Old Testament times, as we know from the mention of banners as early as the time of Moses. They are repeatedly referred to by David and Solomon. The lifting up of ensigns is frequently mentioned in the Psalms and by the Prophets, while the expression, "Terrible as an army with banners," shows the importance and the awe with which they were regarded.

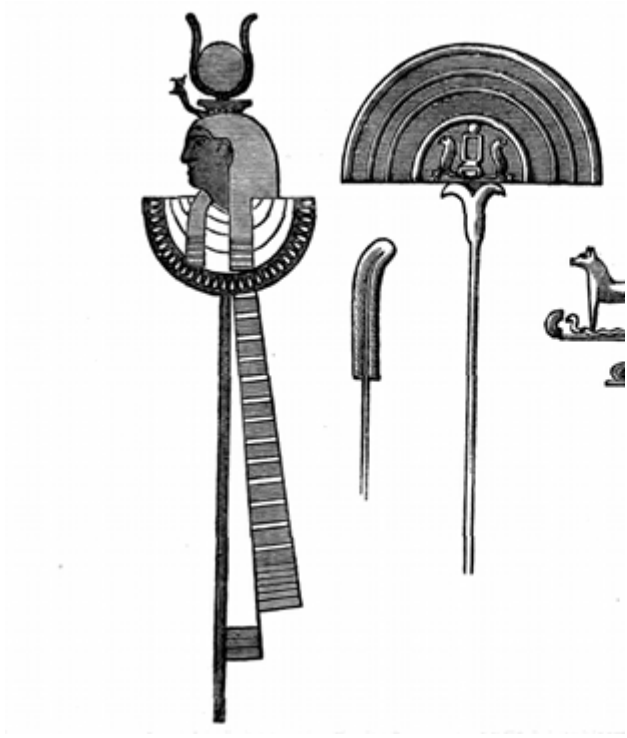


Fig. 1.—Egyptian Stanc

We find representations of standards on the oldest bas-reliefs of Egypt. Indeed, the invention of standards is, by ancient writers, attributed to the Egyptians. According to Diodorus, the Egyptian standards consisted generally of the figures of their sacred animals borne on the end of a staff or spear, and in the paintings at Thebes we find on them such objects as a king's name and a sacred boat. One prominent and much used form was a figure resembling an expanded semicircular fan, and another example shows this form reversed and surmounted by the head of the goddess Athor,

crowned with her symbolic disk and cow's horns. Another figure also used as a standard resembles a round-headed table-knife. Examples of these, and of the sacred ibis and dog, are shown in Fig. 1.[1] But on the Egyptian standards—those which were no doubt used in Pharaoh's army—there were various other figures, including reptiles such as lizards and beetles, with birds crowned with the fan-like ornament already referred to. A group of these is given in Fig. 2; but they had many other forms. Those represented in Fig. 3, and which show some curious symbolic forms, are taken from the works of Champollion, Wilkinson, and Rosellini.

[1] For this, and figures 6, 14, and 15, I am indebted to the courtesy of Messrs. A. and C. Black. They appear in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. ix. p. 276.



Fig. 2.—Egyptian Standards.



Fig. 3.—Egyptian Standards.

That the Hebrews carried standards after the exodus is, as I have already said, certain, and the probability is that they derived the practice from the Egyptian nation, from whose bondage they had just escaped, for they bore as devices figures of birds and animals, and also human figures, just as the Egyptians did. One of the earliest of the divine commands given to Moses was that "every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard with the ensign of their father's house."[2] The *ensign* probably meant the particular device borne upon the

standard by each tribe; and tradition has assigned as these the symbolic cherubim seen in the visions of Ezekiel and John—Judah bearing a lion, Reuben a man, Ephraim an ox, and Dan an eagle. This is the opinion of the later Jews. The Targumists believe that, besides these representations, the banners were distinguished by particular colours—the colour for each tribe being analogous to that of the precious stone in the breastplate of the high-priest. They consider also that each standard bore the name of the tribe with a particular sentence from the Law. The modern opinion, however, is that the Hebrew standards were distinguished only by their colours, and by the name of the tribe to which each belonged.

[2] Numbers ii. 2.

Apart from the direct Scripture evidence on the subject, this bearing of distinguishing standards is what might be expected in a military organization such as that of the Israelites, just as we find them using warlike music. It is interesting to note that even the particular trumpet signals to be used for the assembling and advance of the troops, and in cases of alarm in time of war, are carefully prescribed,[3] while the association of their military standards with the trumpet is indicated in the exclamation of Jeremiah: "How long shall I see the standard and hear the sound of the trumpet?"[4]

[3] Numbers x. 3.

[4] Jer. iv. 21.

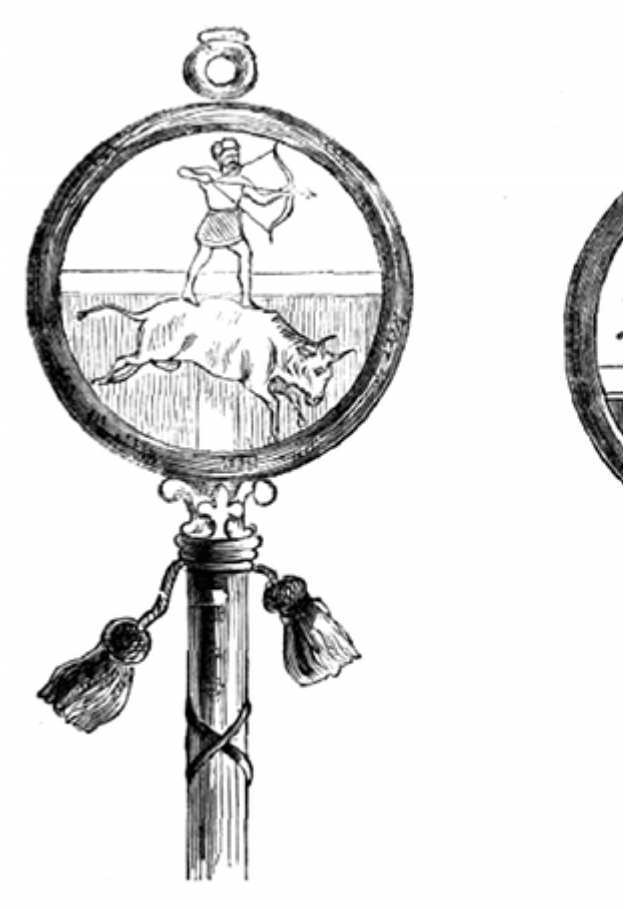


Fig. 4.—An Assyrian Standard. Fig. 5.—A

As the standard was among all nations regarded with reverence, so the standard-bearer was selected for his strength and courage. So important was this considered that Isaiah, in describing the ruin and discomfiture that was about to fall on the King of Assyria, could find no stronger expression than to say that his overthrow would be "as when a standard-

bearer fainteth."[5]

[5] Isa. x. 18.

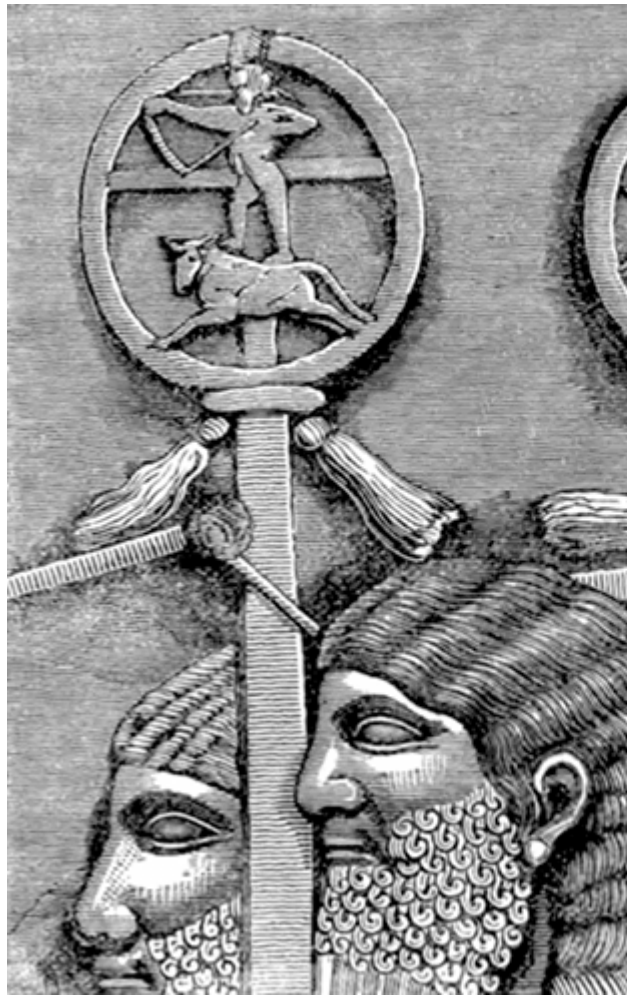


Fig. 6.—Assyrian Standards and S

The standards of the Assyrians, like those of the Egyptians, consisted of figures fastened on the end of

spears or staffs; but of these very few varieties have been yet discovered. Layard says[6] that "standards were carried by the Assyrian charioteers. In the sculptures they have only two devices [Figs. 4, 5, 6]: one a figure, probably that of a divinity, standing on a bull and drawing a bow; in the other, two bulls running in opposite directions. These figures are inclosed in a circle and fixed to a long staff ornamented with streamers and tassels. The standards appear to have been partly supported by a rest in front of the chariot, and a long rope connecting them with the extremity of the pole. In a bas-relief of Khorsabad this rod is attached to the top of a standard." The interesting illustration given in Fig. 6 is from a sculpture in which these standards are represented with the figures of the standard-bearers, and in which also the ropes or supports of the staff are indicated.

[6] *Nineveh and its Remains.*

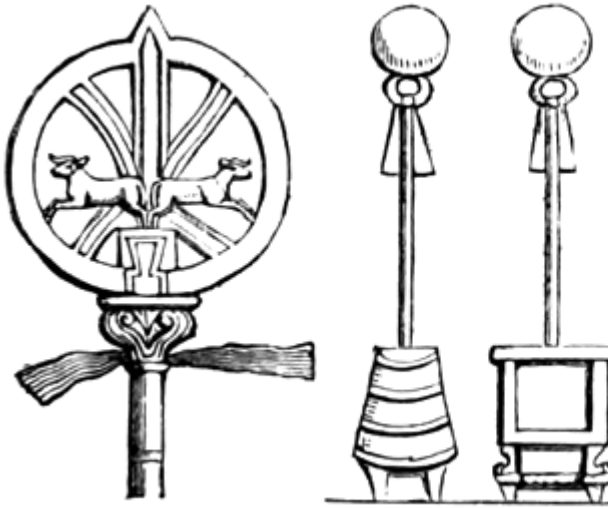


Fig. 7.—Assyrian Stanc

There were, however, varieties in the forms of the Assyrian standards other than those mentioned by Layard. In the annexed cut (Fig. 7) the one to the left is from a sculpture in the British Museum. The others are given on the authority of Botta.

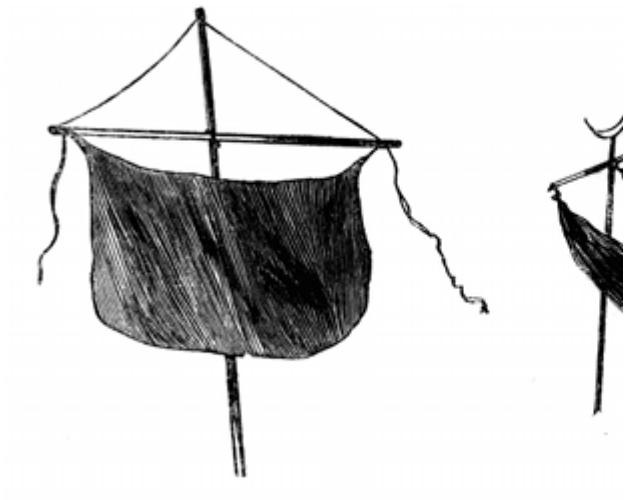


Fig. 8.—Persian Standard. Fig. 9.—Turk



Fig. 10.—Standard of Pacha.

The Persians, like the Assyrians, carried their standards, in battle, on staffs or spears attached to chariots. Their royal standard was a golden eagle with wings expanded carried on the end of a spear. They had also a figure of the sun which they used on great occasions when the king was present with the army. Quintus Curtius describes one of these figures of the sun, inclosed in a crystal, as making a very splendid appearance above the royal tent. But the proper royal standard of the Persians for many centuries, until the Mahommedan conquest, was a

blacksmith's leather apron, around which the people had been at one time rallied to a successful opposition against an invader (Fig. 8). Many other national standards have had their origin in similar causes. Something which was at hand was seized in an emergency, and lifted up as a rallying point for the people, and afterwards adopted from the attachment which clung to it as an object identified with patriotic deeds. In this way originated the horse-tails borne as a standard by the modern Turks (Fig. 9). Under the old system, among that people, the distinction of rank between the two classes of pachas was indicated by the number of these horse-tails, the standards of the second class having only two tails, while those of the higher had three. Hence the term a pacha of two tails or three. A further mark of distinction appears to have been the elevation of one of the tails above the others, and the surmounting of each with the crescent, as shown in Fig. 10.



Fig. 11.



Fig. 12.

The Romans had various forms of standards, some composed entirely of fixed figures of different devices, including figures of animals. The eagle, according to Pliny, was the first and chief military ensign. In the second consulship of Caius Marius (B.C. 104) the eagle (Fig. 11) alone was used, but at a subsequent period some of the old emblems were resumed. These were the minotaur, the horse, and the wild boar; and on the Trajan Column we find as one of their standards the historic wolf (Fig. 12).

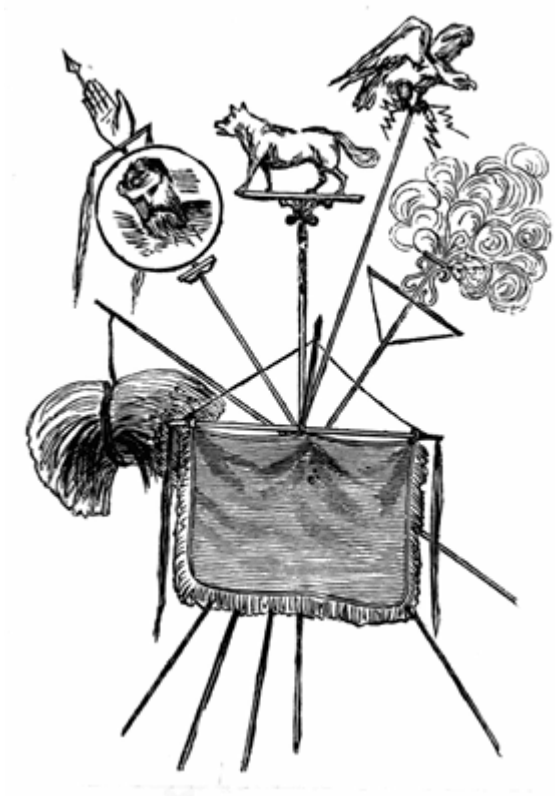


Fig. 13.—Roman Standards.

One of the most ancient of the Roman standards had an origin similar to that of the apron of the Persians and the horse-tails of the Turks. It was derived from a popular rising which took place in the time of Romulus, and was composed of a wisp of hay attached to the end of a pole (as seen in Fig. 13), and carried into battle. From its name, *manipulus*, the companies of foot soldiers, of which the *hastati*, *principes*, and *triarii* of each legion were composed, came to be called maniples—*manipuli*. Another standard borne by the Romans was a spear with a

piece of cross wood at the top with the figure of a hand above, and having below a small round shield of gold or silver, as shown in Fig. 13. On this circle were at first represented the warlike deities Mars and Minerva, but after the extinction of the commonwealth it bore the effigies of the emperors and their favourites. From these coin-shaped devices the standards were called *numina legionum*. The eagle was sometimes represented with a thunderbolt in its claws, of which an example will be seen in Fig. 13. Under the later emperors it was carried with the legion, which was on that account sometimes termed *aquila*. The place for this standard was near the general, almost in the centre.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.

Another common form of the Roman standard consisted in a variety of figures and devices exhibited on the same staff, one over the other. On the top of one of these will be seen a human hand (Fig. 14). This by itself, or inclosed, as here, within a wreath, was, as I have mentioned, a frequent device, and was probably of oriental origin. It is also found as a symbol in ancient Mexico; and at the present day the flagstaffs of the Persians terminate in a silver hand. Among the pieces composing this form of standard are also found the eagle, and figures of the emperors

inclosed in circles, with other devices (Fig. 15). A common form is that numbered 5 in Fig. 16. This example is taken from the Arch of Titus. The eagle surmounting the thunderbolt with the letters S P Q R (No. 3) was also a common form. The letters indicate *Senatus Populusque Romanus*. The examples Nos. 1 and 2 in Fig. 16 are from Montfaucon. No. 4 is given by Mr. Hope.

The *vexillum* of the Romans was a standard composed of a square piece of cloth fastened to a cross bar at the top of a spear, sometimes with a fringe all round as shown in Fig. 13, and sometimes fringed only below (No. 4, Fig. 16), or without a fringe, but draped at the sides (Fig. 17). When placed over the general's tent it was a sign for marching, or for battle.



Fig. 16.—Roman Stand



Fig. 17.

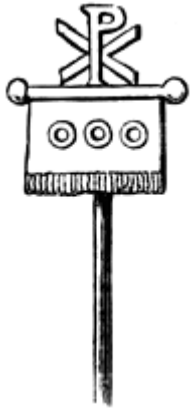


Fig. 18.



Fig. 19.

The *labarum* of the emperors was similar in form, and frequently bore upon it a representation of the emperor, sometimes by himself and sometimes accompanied by the heads of members of his family. It has been said that the Emperor Constantine bore on the top of his standard the sign of the cross, but this was not so. The cross at that time was known only as a heathen emblem, and was not adopted by the Christians till afterwards. That which Constantine bore was what in his time was the only recognized Christian emblem—the first two letters of our Lord's name (Fig. 18)—the Greek X (English CH) and P (in English R). The *labarum* was made of silk. The term is sometimes used for other standards, and its form may still be recognized in the banners carried in ecclesiastical processions. The *labarum*, like the *vexillum*, had sometimes fringes with tassels or

ribbons.

The dragon, an ensign of the Parthians, was adopted by the Romans as the standard of their cohorts. It appears as such on the Arch of Severus. It was also the device of the Dacians, and indeed seems to have been a general ensign among barbarians. Besides being carried as a separate figure in metal—as shown in Fig. 19—it was frequently embroidered in cotton or silk on a square piece of cloth borne on a cross bar elevated on a gilt staff; the bearer being called *draconarius*. From the Romans the dragon came to the Western Empire. It was borne by the German Emperors. In England also it was for some time the chief standard of the kings, and of the Dukes of Normandy, and according to Sir Richard Bacon it was the standard of Utor Pendragon, king of the Britons.[7] The golden dragon was in the eighth century the standard of Wessex, and it was displayed in a great battle in 742 when Ethelbald, the king of Mercia, was defeated. It was also borne on a pole by King Harold as a standard. It was borne by Henry VII. at Bosworth Field, and at a later date it was carried as a supporter by Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and also by Elizabeth. In many of the illuminations of MSS. in the fifteenth century we also find a gold dragon on a red pennon, as one of the ensigns in the French armies.

[7] Nisbet's *Heraldry*, vol. i. p. 343.

The infantry flag of the Romans was red, that of the cavalry blue, and that of a consul white.

The banners of the Parthians resembled those of the Romans, but they were more richly decorated with gold and silk.

In early times the Greeks carried as a standard a piece of armour on a spear, but although they had an ensign, the elevation of which served as a signal for giving battle either by land or by sea, they were not regularly marshalled by banners. In their later history their different cities bore different sacred emblems. Thus the Athenians were distinguished by the olive and the owl, and the Corinthians by a Pegasus.

At what time the form of standard which we call a flag was first used is not known. It was certainly not the earliest but the ultimate form which the standard assumed. The original form was some fixed object such as we have seen on the Egyptian and Roman examples, and the vexillum and labarum were transitional forms. The waving flag is said to have been first used by the Saracens. Another account is that the flag first acquired its present form in the sixth century, in Spain. The banners which Bede mentions as being carried by St. Augustine and his monks, when they entered Canterbury in procession, in the latter part of the sixth century, were probably in the form of the Roman labarum. He calls them little banners on which were depicted crosses.

Of our own national flags the earliest forms were those which bore the cognizance of the ruler for the time being. The well-known ensign of the Danes at the time of their dominion in Britain was the raven. The dragon, as we have seen, was in the eighth century the cognizance of Wessex, and the Saxons had also on their standards a white horse. Of our later royal standards and those of other nations I shall speak afterwards.

The forms of flags in our own country have varied

very much. It was not till the time of the Crusades, when heraldry began to assume a definite form, that they became subject to established rules. Up to that period flags were, as a rule, small in size, and they usually terminated in points, like the more modern pennon. Such were the standards of the Normans. At the Battle of the Standard in 1138 the staff of the English standard was in the form of the mast of a ship, having a silver pyx at the top, containing the host, and bearing three sacred banners dedicated respectively to St. Peter, St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfrid of Ripon, the whole being fastened—like the standards of the Persians and Assyrians—to a wheeled vehicle.

From an early period the practice has prevailed of blessing standards, and this has continued to our own day in the British army when new colours are presented to a regiment—there being a special form of service at the consecration. The banner of William the Conqueror was one blessed and sent to him by the pope. Indeed, it has been the practice of the popes in every age to give consecrated banners where they wished success to an enterprise.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF FLAGS—GONFANON—PENNON—PENONCEL.

In the middle ages almost every flag was a military one. A very early form, borne near the person of the

commander-in-chief, was the Gonfanon. It was fixed in a frame made to turn like a modern ship's vane. That of the Conqueror, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry, had three tails, and was charged with a golden cross on a white ground within a blue border.

Of other forms of flags the principal varieties were the penoncel, the pennon or guidon, the banner, and the standard.

The Pennon was a purely personal flag, pointed, borne below the lance-head by a knight-bachelor, and charged with the arms, or crest, and motto of the bearer. But in early times no knight displayed a pennon who had not followers to defend it—the mounting of this ensign being a matter of privilege, not of obligation. The order of knight-bachelor was the most ancient and originally the sole order, being the degree conferred by one knight on another without the intervention of prince, noble, or churchman, and its privileges and duties approached nearly to those of the knight-errant.[8]

[8] Sir Walter Scott, *Essay on Chivalry*, p. 79.

The Penoncel, which was carried by the esquire, was the diminutive of the pennon, being one-half its breadth. It was borne at the end of a lance, and usually bore the cognizance or "avowrye" of the bearer. This flag was not carried by the esquire after the fight began, but was then either held by an inferior attendant, or put up by the owner's tent.

BANNERS.

The Banner was the flag of a troop, and was borne

by knights, called after it bannerets, an order which held a middle rank between knights-bachelors and the barons or great feudatories of the crown. The flag of a knight-banneret was square at the end, but not an exact square on all the sides. The perfectly square banner was the flag of a baron, and of those of higher rank.

It was only on the field of battle, and in presence of the royal standard, that a knight-banneret could be created. It was the custom for the commander of the host thus to reward the distinguished services of a knight-bachelor bearing a pennon, and he did so by tearing off the "fly," or outer part of that flag, and by so doing giving it a square form, thus making it a banner, and its bearer a knight-banneret. The ceremony is thus described by Blome.[9] "The king (or his general), at the head of the army, drawn up into battalia after a victory, under the royal standard displayed, attended with all the field-officers and nobles of the court, receives the knight led between two renowned knights or valiant men-at-arms, having his pennon or guydon of arms in his hand; and before them the heralds, who proclaim his valiant achievements, for which he deserves to be made a knight-banneret, and to display his banner in the field. Then the king (or general) says unto him *Advances toy, Bannaret*, and causes the point of his pennon to be rent off; and the new knight, having the trumpets before him sounding, the nobles and officers accompanying him, is remitted to his tent, where they are nobly entertained."

[9] *Analogia Honoria.* London, 1637; p. 84.

But knights were thus promoted before a battle as well as after it. Froissart relates the manner in which

the celebrated Sir John Chandos was made banneret by the Black Prince before the battle of Navarete. The whole scene forms a striking picture of an army of the middle ages moving to battle. Upon the pennons of the knights, penoncels of the squires, and banners of the barons and bannerets, the army formed, or, in modern phrase, dressed its line. The usual word of the attack was, "Advance banners in the name of God and Saint George." "When the sun was risen," writes Froissart, "it was a beautiful sight to view these battalions, with their brilliant armour glittering with its beams. In this manner they nearly approached to each other. The prince, with a few attendants, mounted a small hill, and saw very clearly the enemy marching straight towards them. Upon descending this hill he extended his line of battle on the plain, and then halted. The Spaniards, seeing the English halted, did the same, in order of battle; then each man tightened his armour and made ready as for instant combat. Sir John Chandos then advanced in front of the battalions, with his banner [pennon] uncased in his hand. He presented it to the prince, saying 'My lord, here is my banner; I present it to you that I may display it in whatever manner shall be most agreeable to you, for, thanks to God, I have now sufficient lands that will enable me so to do, and maintain the rank which it ought to hold.' The prince, Don Pedro being present, took the banner in his hands, which was blazoned with a sharp stake gules, on a field argent; and after having cut off the tail to make it square, he displayed it, and, returning it to him by the handle, said, 'Sir John, I return you your banner: God give you strength and honour to preserve it.' Upon this Sir John left the prince, and went back to his men with the banner in his hand."[10]

[10] Johnes' *Froissart*, vol. i. p. 731.

A banneret was expected to bring into the field at least thirty men-at-arms—that is, knights or squires mounted—at his own expense; and each of these, again, besides his attendants on foot, ought to have had a mounted crossbow-man, and a horseman armed with a bow and axe—forming altogether a large troop. The same force might be arrayed by a knight under a pennon, but his accepting a banner bound him to bring out that number at least. After the reign of Charles IV. this obligation fell into disuse in France, and in England, soon after that time, it also ceased to be observed.[11] Judging, however, from the contemporary heraldic poem of the "Siege of Carlaverock" (June, 1300), it would appear that early in the fourteenth century there was a banner to every twenty-five or thirty men-at-arms. At that period the English forces comprised the tenants *in capite* of the crown, who were entitled to lead their contingent under a banner of their arms—either by themselves or under a deputy of equal rank. Thus at Carlaverock the Bishop of Durham sent 160 of his men-at-arms, with his banner intrusted to John de Hastings. But his banner on this occasion bore, not the cognisance of the see, but simply his paternal arms. Having mentioned this old poem—in which the arms of every banneret in the English army are accurately blazoned—it may be interesting to give one of the opening verses, as an example of the Norman French of the period—

"La ont meinte riche garnement

Brode sur cendeaus et samis,

Meint beau penon en lance mis,

Meint baniere desploie."

In English—There were many rich caparisons, embroidered on silks and satins, many a beautiful penon fixed to a lance, and many a banner displayed.

[11] Sir Walter Scott, *Essay on Chivalry*.

In the Scottish wars, the banner of St. Cuthbert was, in the English army, carried by a monk. This continued to be done so late as the reign of Henry VIII. In the same way the banner of St. John of Beverley was carried by one of the vicars of Beverley College—who, by the way, received eight pence halfpenny per diem as his wages, to carry it after the king—a large sum in those days—and a penny a day to carry it back.[12] The bearer of a banner, or bannerer as he was called, was in these early times a very important personage. In the old paintings in MSS. the persons holding the national or royal banners are generally represented in the same kind of armour as the chief leaders. And they were liberally rewarded for their services. In 1361 Edward III. granted Sir Guy de Bryon 200 marks a year for life for having discreetly borne the king's banner at the siege of Calais in 1347.[13]

[12] Prynne's *Antiquæ Constitutiones Angliæ*, vol. iii. p. 118.

[13] *Calend. Rot. Patent.* p. 173.

We learn from the "Siege of Carlaverock" that a pennon hung out by the besieged was the signal for a parley. When the castle surrendered there were placed on its battlements, we are told, the banners of the king, of St. George, of St. Edmund, and St. Edward, together with those of the marshall and

constable of the army. To these were added the banner of the individual to whose custody the castle was committed. But it is doubtful whether in the fifteenth century any others but those of the king and St. George were affixed to captured fortresses.

In France the office of custodier of national banners—such as the Oriflamme—was hereditary. It was the same in Ireland, which claims a higher antiquity in the use of banners than any other European nation; and in Scotland the representative of the great house of Scrymgeour enjoys the honour of being banner-bearer to the sovereign.[14]

[14] *Vicissitudes of Families and other Essays*, by Sir Bernard Burke, 1st series, p. 387.

It was the custom in early times to have banners suspended from trumpets. At the battle of Agincourt the Duke of Brabant, who arrived on the field towards the close of the conflict, is said, by St. Remy, to have taken one of the banners from his trumpeters, and, cutting a hole in the middle, made a surcoat of arms of it. To this circumstance Shakespeare thus alludes—

"I will a banner from my trumpet take

And use it for my haste."

Chaucer, too, notices banners being suspended from trumpets—

"On every trump hanging a brod
banere,

Of fine tartarium full richly bete,

Every trumpet his lorde's armes

bere."[15]

[15] *Flour and the Leafe*, 1 211.

At coronations banners were also used; and in the fifteenth century heralds, when despatched on missions, appear to have carried a banner bearing their sovereign's arms. Banners were also for a long time used at funerals. It was not till about the period of the Revolution that the practice fell into comparative desuetude.

STANDARDS—THE ROYAL STANDARD.

The Standard was a large long flag, gradually tapering towards the fly. According to the representation of a standard, in a heraldic MS. at least as early as the reign of Henry VII., in the British Museum, it was not quite so deep but very much longer than a banner,[16] and it varied in size according to the rank of the owner. In England that of a duke was seven yards in length, of a banneret four and a half, and of a knight-bachelor four yards.

[16] *Harleian MSS.* 2259, f. 186.

The Royal Standard of England, when the sovereign in person commanded the army, appears to have been of two sizes. According to the MS. referred to, one of these standards is to be "sett before the Kynges pavillion or tente, and not to be borne in

battayle, and to be in length eleven yards." The other —"the Kynges standard *to be borne*"—is to be "in lengthe eight or nine yards."

The Royal Standard is a flag personal to the sovereign. It was not always exclusively so, for in the seventeenth century the Lord High Admiral, when personally in command of the fleet, and sometimes also other commanders-in-chief, flew as their flag of command, not the Union, but the Standard. It was so flown at the main by the Duke of Buckingham as Lord High Admiral, on the occasion when he disgraced the English flag in the unfortunate expedition against the Isle of Rhé in 1627. But now the Royal Standard is used only by the sovereign in person, or as a decoration on royal fête days. There are depicted on it the royal arms, which have had various forms in different periods of our history. The standard of Edward the Confessor was azure a cross floré between five martlets, or. The arms of William Duke of Normandy, emblazoned on his standard, were two lions, and they were borne by him and his successors, as the royal arms of England, till the reign of Henry II. That monarch married Eleanor, daughter and co-heiress of the Duke of Aquitaine, whose arms—one lion—Henry added to his own. Hence the three lions *passant gardant in pale*, borne ever since as the ensigns of England. These now occupy the first and fourth quarters of the standard, but they did not always do so. The fleurs-de-lis of France were, till a comparatively recent period, quartered with the English arms, having been first borne by Edward III. when he assumed the title of King of France. Many noble families, both in this country and on the Continent, have quartered the French lilies to show their origin, or in acknowledgment of the tenure of important fiefs

there. Among the last may be mentioned the arms of Sir John Stewart of Darnley, who obtained from Charles VII. the lands and title of Aubigny, and the right to quarter the arms of France with his own. But in all these instances the fleurs-de-lis occupied a secondary place. So if Henry II. had desired merely to show his French connection, by maternal descent, he would have placed them in the second and third quarters. But he placed them in the first quarter, as arms of dominion, to indicate that he claimed the kingdom by right, and our sovereigns continued this idle pretence till so late as the reign of George III. It was not till the union with Ireland that it was discontinued.

Some of the English kings bore personal standards besides the flag of their own arms. Edward IV., besides his royal standard, generally bore a banner with a white rose. Henry VII. at the battle of Bosworth Field had three personal standards, in addition to the standard of his own arms. The blazon of these three, and how the king disposed of them after the battle, are thus described in a contemporary manuscript:—"With great pompe and triumphe he roade through the Cytie to the Cathedral Church of St. Paul where he offered his iij standards. In the one was the image of St. George; in the second was a red firye dragon beaten upon white and green sarcenet; the third was of yellow tarterne [a kind of fine cloth of silk] in the which was painted a donne Kowe."[17]

[17] *Lansdowne MSS.* 255, f. 433.

The Royal Standard of Scotland was a red lion rampant on a gold field within a red double tressure, floré counterfloré, of which the origin is veiled in the mists of antiquity. Our great heraldic authority,

Nisbet, in common with earlier writers, adopts the tradition which assigns the assumption of the rampant lion to Fergus I., who is alleged to have flourished as King of Scotland about 330 years before Christ. He also refers to the celebrated league which Charlemagne is said to have entered into in the beginning of the ninth century with Achaius, King of Scotland, on account of his assistance in war, "for which special service performed by the Scots the French king encompassed the Scots lion, which was famous all over Europe, with a double tressure, flowered and counterflowered with flower de luces, the armorial figures of France, of the colour of the lion, to show that it had formerly defended the French lilies, and that these thereafter shall continue a defence for the Scots lion and as a badge of friendship."[18] On the other hand Chalmers observes that these two monarchs were probably not even aware of each other's existence, and he suggests that the lion—which first appears on the seal of Alexander II.—may have been derived from the arms of the old Earls of Northumberland and Huntingdon, from whom some of the Scottish kings were descended. He adds, however, that the lion was the cognisance of Galloway, and perhaps also of all the Celtic nations. Chalmers also mentions an "ould roll of armes," preserved by Leland, said to be of the age of Henry III. (1216), and which the context shows to be at least as old as the reign of Edward I. (1272), in which the arms of Scotland are thus described: "Le roy de Scosce dor a un lion de goules a un bordure dor flurette de goules."[19] In 1471 the parliament of James III. "ordanit that in tyme to cum thar suld be na double tresor about his armys, but that he suld ber hale armys of the lyoun without ony mar." If this alteration of the blazon was ever actually made, it

did not long continue.[20]

[18] *System of Heraldry*, vol. ii. part iii. p. 98.

[19] *Caledonia*, i. 762, note (i.).

[20] Seton's *Law and Practice of Heraldry in Scotland*, p. 425.

With one noted exception Scotland never quartered the arms of any kingdom with her own. The exception was when Mary Stuart claimed the arms and style of England, and quartered these arms on her standard. This was perhaps the first, and, as it proved, an inexpiable provocation to Elizabeth.[21] Mary's mode of blazoning was peculiar. She bore Scotland and England quarterly—the former being placed first, and, over all, *the dexter half* of an escutcheon of pretence, charged with the arms of England, the sinister half being obscured in order to intimate that she was kept out of her right.[22]

[21] Hallam's *Constitutional History*, 4th edit. i. 127.

[22] Strype's *Annals*, quoted by Mr. Seton, p. 427.

On the accession of James I. the Royal Standard of England was altered. The arms of France and England quarterly appeared in the first and fourth quarters, those of Scotland in the second, and in the third the golden harp of Ireland, which had taken the place of the three crowns. But an exception occurred in the case of William III., who, on his landing in England, had a standard bearing the motto, "The Protestant Religion and Liberties of England," and, under the royal arms of England, instead of "Dieu et mon Droit," the words "And I will maintain it." Afterwards he impaled on his standard the arms of

Mary with his own. They are represented in this form in a MS. of the Harleian Library, on a banner per pale orange and yellow. After his elevation to the throne William placed over the arms of the queen, which were those of her father James II., his own paternal coat of Nassau.[23]

[23] Willement's *Regal Heraldry*, p. 95.

George III. when he left out the ensigns of France marshalled on his standard those of his Germanic states in an escutcheon of pretence—a small shield in the centre point. This was omitted on the accession of Queen Victoria, who bears on her standard the arms of England in the first and fourth quarters, Scotland in the second, and Ireland in the third. (See Plate IV. No. 1, p. 108.)

But while the Royal Standard was, on the accession of James I., altered for England in the way I have described, it was displayed according to a different blazon in Scotland. For a long period, whenever the standard was used to the north of the Tweed, the Scottish arms had precedence by being placed in the first and fourth quarters. On the great seal of Scotland this precedence is still continued, and the Scottish unicorn also occupies the dexter side of the shield as a supporter. But on the standard the arms of Scotland have now lost their precedence, those of England being placed in the first quarter, and although there has been much controversy on the subject, I agree with Mr. Seton[24] that it is better that the arrangement should be so. The standard is the personal flag of the sovereign of one united kingdom, and heraldic propriety appears to require that only one unvarying armorial achievement should be used on it—that of the larger and more

important kingdom taking precedence, although Nisbet[25] claims precedence for the Scottish arms on the achievement of Great Britain as those of "the ancientest sovereignty."[26] I certainly do not agree with Mr. Seton, however, that either in the arms or supporters precedence ought to be granted to England "in accordance with the sentiment of certain well-known classical lines:—

"'The Lion and the Unicorn

Were fighting for the Crown,

The Lion beat the Unicorn

All round the town.'"[27]

[24] *Scottish Heraldry*, p. 445.

[25] Vol ii. part iii. p. 90.

[26] Sir George Mackenzie says: "The King of Scotland being equal in dignity with the Kings of England, France, and Spain, attained to that dignity before any of these." He therefore claims precedence for Scotland over all these kingdoms. *Treatise on Precedency*, p. 4.

[27] *Scottish Heraldry*, p. 446.

I do not know where Mr. Seton got that version, inconsistent as it is alike with patriotism and with historical accuracy. It is certainly not the correct one. The true version, familiar to every boy in Scotland, is more impartial, and it has more fun in it. It runs thus:—

"The Lion and the Unicorn,

Fighting for the Crown:

Up came a little dog

And knocked them both down."

—the "little dog" being the small lion which stands defiantly on the crown, and constitutes the royal crest at the top of the achievement.

The supporters of the Scottish arms were two unicorns. In England, previous to the accession of the Stuarts, the supporters of the royal arms were changed at the caprice of the sovereign, and almost every king or queen adopted new ones. From these, and from the royal badges, came many of the curious names which may be found in old lists of ships. Such as the "Antelope," which refers to one of the supporters of Henry VI.; the "Bull" of Edward IV.; the "Dragon" of Henry VIII. and of Elizabeth. So also the badges: the "Sun," "Rose in the Sun," and "Falcon in the Fetterlock," were all worn by Edward IV. The "Double Rose" speaks for itself, and the "Hawthorn" belonged to Henry VIII.[28] The supporters assumed by King James, and continued to all his successors, were a lion on the dexter side, and on the sinister one of the Scottish unicorns—the latter displacing the red dragon of the Tudor family.

[28] *Heraldry of the Sea*, by J. K. Laughton, M.A.R.N., 1879.

In ships the Royal Standard is never hoisted now except when her Majesty is on board, or a member of the royal family other than the Prince of Wales. When the latter is on board his own standard is hoisted. It is the same as that of the Queen, except that it bears a label argent of three points, with the arms of Saxony on an escutcheon of pretence. The

standard of the Duke of Edinburgh is the same as that of the Prince of Wales, except that the points of the label are charged, the first and third with a blue anchor, and the second with the St. George's cross. Wherever the sovereign is residing the Royal Standard is hoisted; and on royal anniversaries and state occasions it is hoisted at certain fortresses or stations—home and foreign—specified in the Queen's Regulations.

STANDARDS BORNE BY NOBLES.

Standards borne by subjects were, in early times, according to the Tudor MS. to be "slitt at the end," but they appear to have been also borne square. This is the form in an old standard of Richard, Earl of Warwick—circa 1437—bearing his badge of the bear and ragged staff (Fig. 20). Shakespeare[29] alludes to this device when he puts into the mouth of Warwick the words—

"Now by my father's badge, old
Neville's crest,

The rampant bear chained to the
ragged staff."

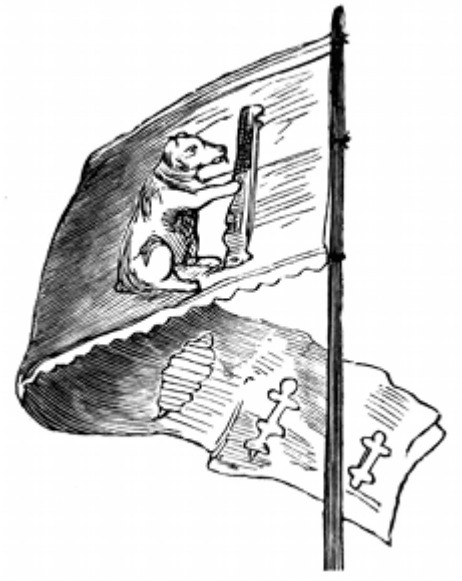


Fig. 20.—Standard of the Earl of Warwick, A.D. 1437.

But Shakespeare was out in his heraldry here, first in confounding the badge with a crest, and secondly in calling it Neville's, for the bear and the ragged staff had been the badge not of the Nevilles but of the Beauchamps, who preceded Warwick in the earldom.[30] This old Earl of Warwick had a similar device on the flag which he flew in his ship. It was a long flag, having the cross of St. George on the upper part—then the bear and ragged staff, and the remainder covered with ragged staffs. It is interesting to note that the account for this and other flags made for the earl in 1437, is preserved. The one just referred to is described as "a great Stremour for the ship of xi yerdis length and viij yerdis in brede," and the price for making it was "j^{li} vi^{s} viii^{d}."[31]

[29] *King Henry VI.* part ii. act v. sc. 1.

[30] Seton's *Scottish Heraldry*, p. 252.

[31] *Antiquities of Warwickshire.*

In the Advocates' Library there is preserved an interesting flag, which is said to have been the standard borne by the Earl Marshall at the battle of Flodden (Fig. 21). It is thus described in the paper which accompanies it: "The standard of the Earl Marshall of Scotland, carried at the battle of Flodden, 1513, by *black* John Skirving of Plewland Hill, his standard-bearer. Skirving was taken prisoner, having previously, however, concealed the banner about his person. The relic was handed down in the Skirving family, and presented to the Faculty of Advocates by William Skirving of Edinburgh, in the beginning of the present century. The arms and motto are those of the Keith family."



Fig. 21.—Flag of the Earl M

The flag may have been borne by the earl at

Flodden, but the devices on it are certainly not his *arms*. The arms of the Earl Marshall were, argent, on a chief gules three pallets or; or, as it is otherwise given by Nisbet, pallé of six, or and gules. The *crest* of the earl, however, was a hart's head, and he had for supporters two harts. His motto also was that which appears on the banner, "Veritas vincit." That the full arms should not appear on the standard I can understand, for it was not common to place them there, and in England the Tudor MS. prescribes that, besides the cross of St. George, standards and guidons are to have on them not the arms, but only the bearers "*beast* or crest, with his devyce and word." It is possible, therefore, that the earl may have placed on his flag his well-known crest with the heads of the two harts forming his supporters, though such an arrangement would be unusual.

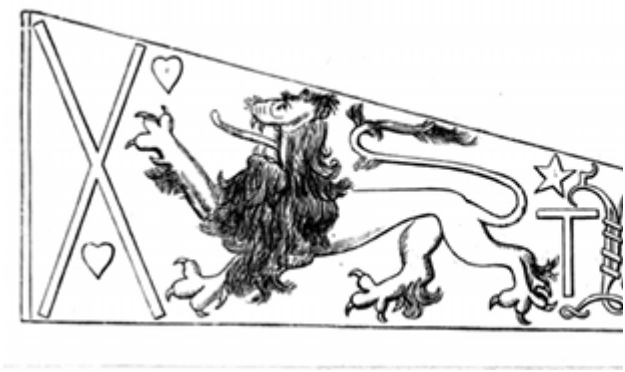


Fig. 22.—Standard of Earl Doug

The relic of a still older fight than that of Flodden is still preserved in Scotland in the standard borne by Earl Douglas at Otterburn—one of the most chivalrous battles, according to Froissart, that was ever fought. The story, as told in all the histories,[32]

is that shortly before the battle, in a skirmish before Newcastle, Douglas, in a personal encounter with Percy, won the pennon of the English leader, and boasted that he would carry it to Scotland and plant it on his castle of Dalkeith; and till lately this standard was supposed to be the flag so captured. But recent investigation has shown that the flag—which, by the way, is not a pennon but a standard thirteen feet long—is that of Douglas himself, which of course his son would be careful to preserve and bring back. The flag is now much faded, and the second word of the motto was, when I saw it lately, not legible, but the motto is undoubtedly that of Earl Douglas, "Jamais arriere" (Fig. 22). The devices are not the arms as borne by his descendants the Dukes of Douglas;—indeed they are not arranged as a coat of arms at all. But the lion rampant for Galloway, the saltire for the lordship of Annandale, and the heart and the star, are all Douglas bearings. Curiously enough, there are two hearts, while the later earls bore only one, and there is only one star, while on their shields they carried three. The real trophies, the capture of which, in all probability, precipitated the battle, are to be found in two other relics which are preserved along with the flag. They consist of two lady's gauntlets, fringed with filigree work in silver, on each of which is embroidered the white lion of the Percys. The gloves are of different sizes, and were perhaps love pledges, carried by Percy suspended from his spear or helmet, as was the fashion of the time; and the loss of such tokens was quite as likely as the loss of a personal flag, to cause the Northumbrian knight to pursue Douglas and force him to battle.[33] These relics are in the possession of the family of Douglas of Cavers in Roxburghshire, descended from the earl who was

slain at Otterburn.

[32] Tytler's *History of Scotland*, ii. 365, &c.

[33] Paper read by Mr. J. A. H. Murray of Hawick to the Hawick Archæological Society.

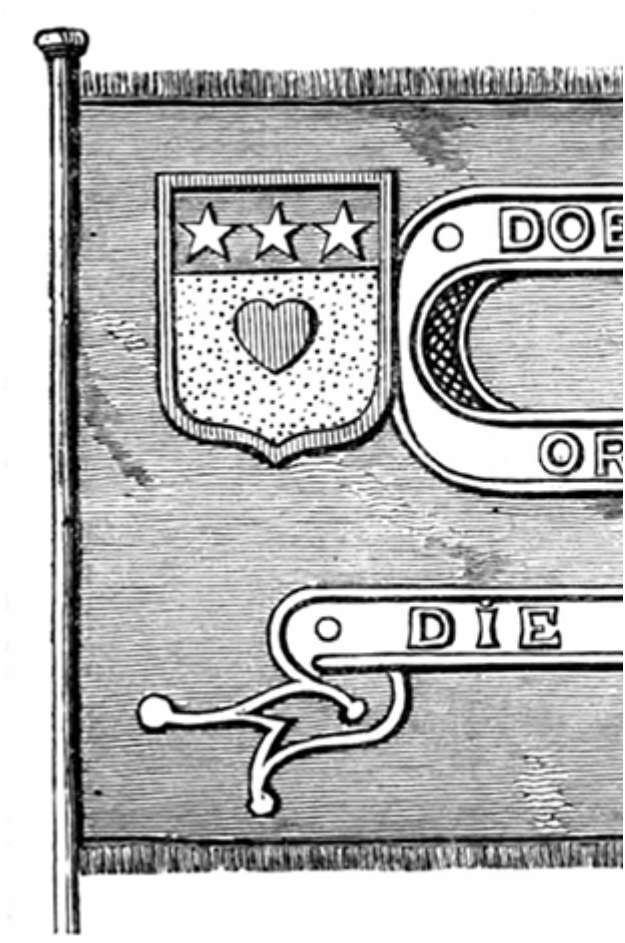


Fig. 23.—Banner of the D

Along with them is preserved another old flag of the Douglas's, but evidently of a later date. It is a good example of the square banner borne by knights of noble rank. It is about 28 inches square, and bears on a shield the Douglas arms, but with the heart as originally borne before it was ensigned with a crown, and the chivalric motto still used by the Cavers family, "Doe or die" (Fig. 23).

FLAGS BORNE BY TRADES.

Besides national and personal flags, those of Trades and Companies were frequently carried in armies, and of these many examples occur in the illuminated copies of Froissart. On one occasion we find on a banner azure a chevron between a hammer, trowel, and plumb. On another there is an axe and two pairs of compasses. And on the painting of the battle between Philip d'Artevel and the Flemings, and the King of France, banners occur charged with boots and shoes, drinking vessels, &c. In Scotland an interesting example is preserved of a Trades flag which was borne at Flodden, and which was presented in 1482 by James III. to the Trades of Edinburgh (Fig. 24). It is familiarly known as the *Blue Blanket*, and is in the possession of the Trades' Maidens' Hospital of Edinburgh. In an accompanying memorandum it is described thus: "The Blue Blanket or standard of the Incorporated Trades of Edinburgh. Renewed by Margaret, Queen of James III., King of Scots: Borne by the craftsmen at the battle of

Flodden in 1513, and displayed on subsequent occasions when the liberties of the city or the life of the sovereign were in danger."

The field of the flag has been blue, but it is now much faded. In the upper corner is the white saltire of Scotland, with the crown above and the thistle in base. On a scroll in the upper part of the flag are the words, "Fear God and Honor the king with a long life and a prosperous reigne;" and, in a scroll below, the words, "And we that is Tradds shall ever pray to be faithfull for the defence of his sacred Majestes royal persone till death." The flag is about ten feet in length.

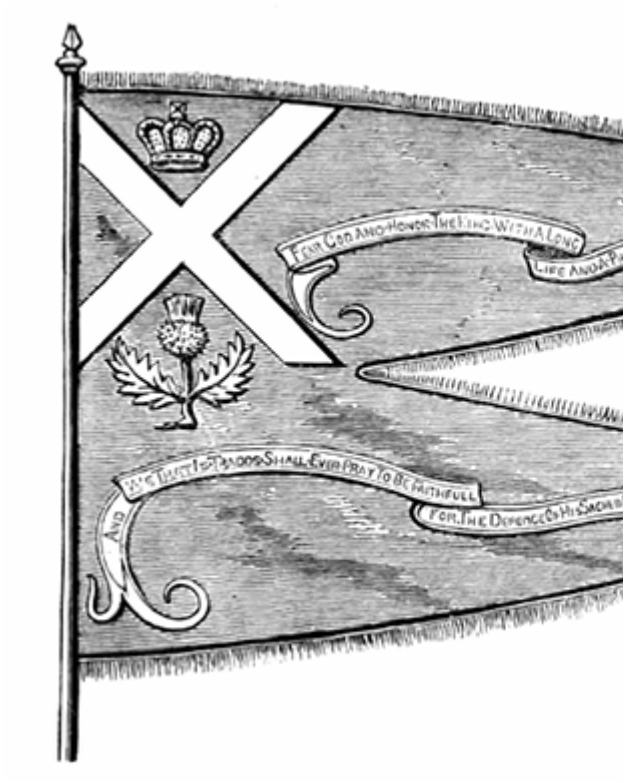


Fig. 24.—The "Blue Blanket,'

FLAGS OF THE COVENANTERS.

Of the flags borne in Scotland by the Covenanters, in their noble struggle for liberty, several are extant, and connected as they are with so important a part of Scottish national history, they are replete with interest. One of these, which is preserved by the Antiquarian Society of Edinburgh, bears the national cross, the white saltire of Scotland, with five roses in the centre point, and the inscription "For religion, Covenants, king, and kingdomes" (Fig. 25).

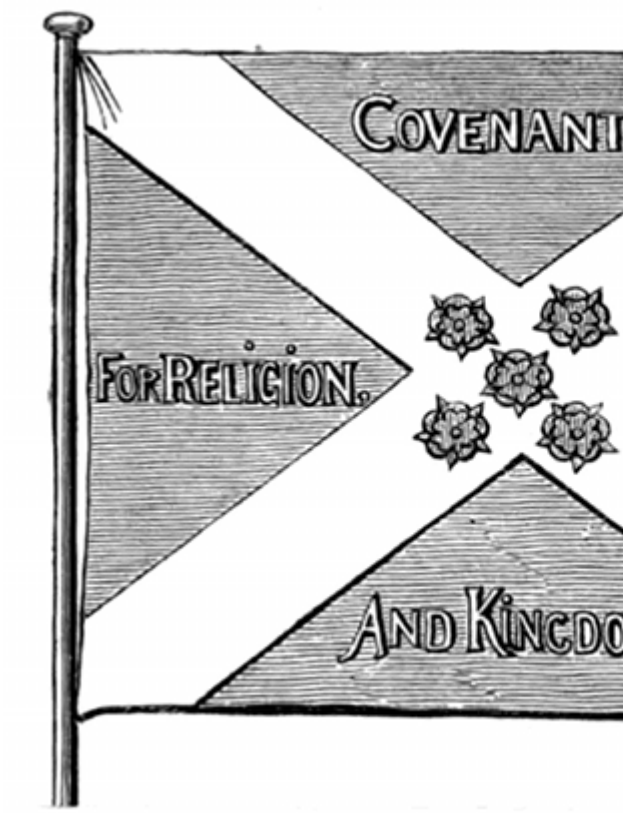


Fig. 25.—Flag of the Covenante

For the description of another of these flags of the Covenanters, to which a more than usual interest attaches, we are indebted to the late distinguished artist and archæologist Mr. James Drummond, R.S.A. [34] Mr. Drummond says it was known as "the Bluidy Banner," and it is important as confirming a statement which had been disputed, namely, that Hamilton of Preston, who commanded the Covenanters at the battle of Bothwell Brig, gave out "No quarter" as the word of the day. Hamilton

himself, in his "Vindication," not only acknowledges this, but boasts of it—"blessing God for it," he says, and "desiring to bless his holy name that since he helped me to set my face to his work, I never had nor would take a favour from mine enemies, either on the right or left hand, and desire to give as few." But Wodrow denies the statement—characterizing it as an unjust imputation on the Covenanters, and in this he is followed by Dr. M'Crie. The discovery of the flag, however, puts the matter beyond doubt. Mr. Drummond found it in the possession of an old gentleman and his sister in East Lothian, and it was only after much persuasion that he was allowed to see it and take a drawing of it. On his asking the old lady why she objected to show it to strangers, she said: "It's the Bluidy Banner, ye ken, and what would the Roman Catholics say if they kenned that our forbears had fought under such a bluidy banner." By Roman Catholics Mr. Drummond understood her to include Episcopalians and all others of a different religious persuasion from her own. The flag is of blue silk. The first line of the inscription, which is composed of gilt letters, is in the Hebrew language —"Jehovah Nissi"—the Lord is my banner. The next line is painted in white—"For Christ and his truths;" and then come the words, in a reddish or blood colour, "No quarters for y^{e} active enimies of y^{e} Covenant." The detailed account given by the custodiers to Mr. Drummond, left no doubt as to the authenticity of this flag. (See Plate II.)

[34] Paper read before the Society of Antiquarians of Scotland, 14th June, 1859.



PLATE II. "THE BLUIDIE BANNER" CA

NATIONAL FLAGS.

But I must proceed to speak of our national flags. For a long time the distinguishing flag of England has been a red cross on a white field. The flag of Scotland is a white saltire (or St. Andrew's cross) on a blue field, and what has come to be called the flag of Ireland is a red saltire on a white field. But Ireland, strictly speaking, never had till lately a national flag. The kings of Ireland previous to 1172 were not hereditary but elective. They were chosen from among the petty kings, and each king, when elected, brought with him and continued to use his

own standard. After the invasion of 1172 the standard of Ireland bore three golden crowns on a blue field, and the three crowns appear on ancient Irish coins. Henry VIII. relinquished this device for the harp, from an apprehension, it is said, that the three crowns might be taken for the triple crown of the pope; but the harp did not appear in the royal standard till it was placed there by James I. Neither had St. Patrick a cross. The cross-saltire, so far as it belongs to any saint, is sacred to St. Andrew only. The origin of the Scottish saltire, however, may possibly be found in the sacred monogram—the Greek X (CH), the initial letter of our Lord's name as borne by the Emperor Constantine, to which I have already referred. I do not know when the Irish saltire was first introduced, as a national flag, but from the early conquest of Ireland the Fitzgeralds have borne as their arms a red saltire on a white field.[35]

[35] *Heraldry of the Sea.*

THE UNION FLAG.

In 1603, on the union of the *crowns* of England and Scotland, the first union flag was formed by the combination of St. George's cross with the saltire of Scotland; but this flag appears to have been used for ships only. The order by the king for its construction and use bears to have been made "in consequence of certain differences between his subjects of North and South Britain anent the bearing of their flags;" and in the proclamation issued in 1606, King James

appoints that "from henceforth all our subjects of this Isle and Kingdom of Great Britain shall bear in the maintop the red cross commonly called St. George's Cross, and the white cross commonly called St. Andrew's Cross, joined together according to a form made by our heralds, and sent by us to our admiral to be published to our said subjects." This was the first union flag. The Scots being, however, sensitively jealous of England, insisted on using their own national flag as well as the union, and it was no doubt owing to this that the proclamation goes on to provide that "in their foretop our subjects of South Britain shall wear the red cross only as they were wont, and our subjects of North Britain in their foretop the white cross only, as they were accustomed." In the ensign the union was not worn till a considerable time afterwards—the union by itself being then as now worn by the king's ships as a jack at the bowsprit.

On the death of Charles I. the Commonwealth Parliament, professing to be the Parliament of England only, and of Ireland as a dependency, expunged the Scottish cross from the flag with its blue field. The flag of command ordered to take the place of the union, and to be borne by the admirals of the respective squadrons, at the main, fore, and mizen, is described[36] as "the arms of England and Ireland in two escutcheons on a red flag within a compartment or,"—that of the admiral, according to Mr. Pepys, being encircled by a laurel wreath, while those of the vice and rear-admirals were plain. The ensigns showed the Irish harp on the fly.[37]

[36] Order dated 5th March, 1649.

[37] *Heraldry of the Sea*, p. 8.

On the Restoration in 1660 the union flag was reintroduced, and when England and Scotland became constitutionally united in 1707, this was confirmed, with an order that it should be used "in all flags, banners, standards, and ensigns, *both at sea and land*." The order in council bears "that the flaggs be according to the draft marked C, wherein the crosses of St. George and St. Andrew are conjoined;" but none of the drafts appear in the Register. A representation of this flag will be found in Plate III. No. I., and there being no draft to copy, I have given it according to the verbal blazon, viz. azure a saltire argent surmounted by a cross gules fimbriated of the second—that is, the St. George's cross with a narrow white border.

On the union with Ireland in the beginning of the present century the Irish saltire was introduced. The St. George's cross remained as it was, but the saltires of Scotland and Ireland were placed side by side, but "counterchanged"—that is, in the first and third divisions or quarters, the white, as senior, is uppermost, and in the second and fourth the red is uppermost. The "verbal blazon," or written direction, is very distinct, but in making the flag, or rather in showing pictorially how it was to be represented, a singular and very absurd error occurred, which, in the manufacture of our flags, has been continued to the present day, and which it may be interesting to explain.

The verbal blazon is contained in the minute by the king in council, and in the proclamation which followed on it, issued on 1st of January, 1801. I need not give the technical words; suffice to say that the flag is appointed to be blue, with the three crosses, or rather, the one cross and two saltires combined.

And, in order to meet a law in heraldry, that colour is not to be placed on colour, or metal upon metal, it is directed that where the red crosses of England and Ireland come in contact with the blue ground of the flag, they are to be "fimbriated"—that is, separated from the blue by a very narrow border of one of the metals—in this case silver, or white. Of heraldic necessity this border of both the red crosses fell to be of the same breadth. To use the words of the written blazon, the St. George's cross is to be "fimbriated *as the saltire*;" a direction so plain that the merest tyro in heraldry could not fail to understand it, and be able to paint the flag accordingly.

Let me premise another thing. It is a universal rule in heraldry that the verbal blazon, when such exists, is alone of authority. Different artists may, from ignorance or from carelessness, express the drawing differently from the directions before them, and this occurs every day; but no one is or can be misled by that if he has the verbal blazon to refer to.

Now, in the important case of the Union flag it so happened that the artist who, according to the practice usual in such cases, was instructed to make a drawing of the flag on the margin of the king's order in council, was either careless or ignorant or stupid. Most probably he was all three, and here is how he depicted it. The horizontal lines represent blue and the perpendicular red; the rest is white. (See Fig. 26.)

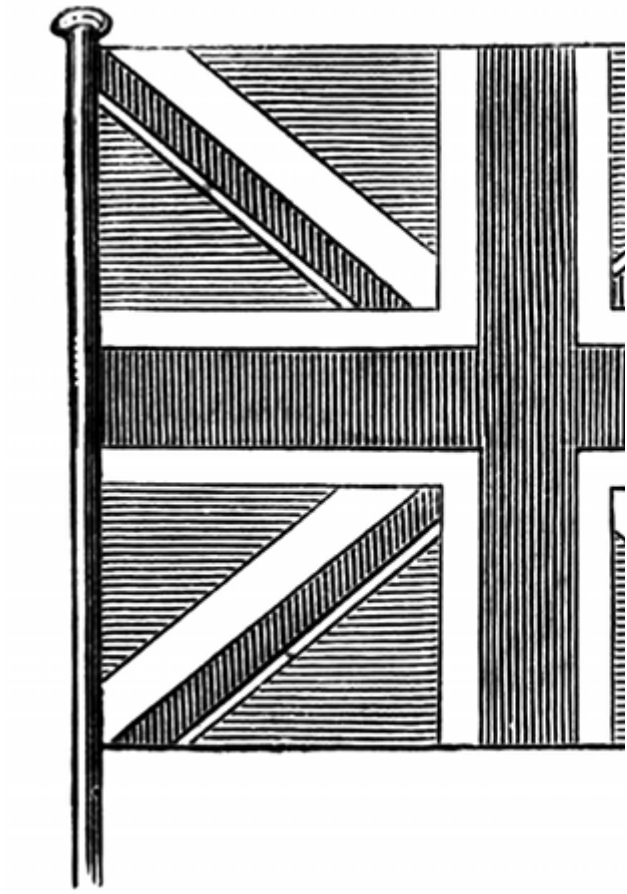


Fig. 26.—Union Flag as depict

Now here, it will be observed, the red saltire of Ireland is "fimbriated" white, according to the instructions; and this is done with perfect accuracy, by the narrowest possible border. But the St. George's cross, instead of being fimbriated in the same way—which the written blazon expressly says it shall be—is not fimbriated at all. The cross is placed upon a

ground of white so broad that it ceases to be a border. The practical effect of this, and its only heraldic meaning, is, that the centre of the flag, instead of being occupied solely by the St. George's cross, is occupied by *two crosses*, a white cross with a red one superinduced on it. So palpable is this that Mr. Laughton, the accomplished lecturer on naval history at the Royal Naval College, in a lecture recently published, suggests that this is perhaps what was really intended. "A fimbriation," he says, "is a narrow border to prevent the unpleasing effect of metal on metal or colour on colour. It should be as narrow as possible to mark the contrast. But the white border of our St. George's cross is not, strictly speaking, a fimbriation at all. It is a white cross of one-third the width of the flag surmounted of a red cross." And his hypothesis is that this may have been intended to commemorate a tradition of the combination of the red cross of England with the white cross of France.[38] The suggestion is ingenious and interesting, but it has clearly no foundation. There might have been something to say for it had there been only the drawing to guide us. In that case, indeed, the theory of Mr. Laughton, or some one similar, would be absolutely necessary to account for the two crosses. But Mr. Laughton overlooks the important facts, first, that we possess in the verbal blazon distinct written instructions; secondly, that where such exist no drawing which is at variance with them can possess any authority; and lastly, that in this case the verbal blazon not only is silent as to a second cross, but it expressly prescribes that there shall be only one, that of St. George. To that nothing is to be added—nothing, that is, but the narrow border or fimbriation necessary to meet the heraldic requirement to separate it from the blue ground of

the flag, the same as is directed to be done, and as has been done, with the saltire of Ireland.

[38] *Heraldry of the Sea*, 1879.

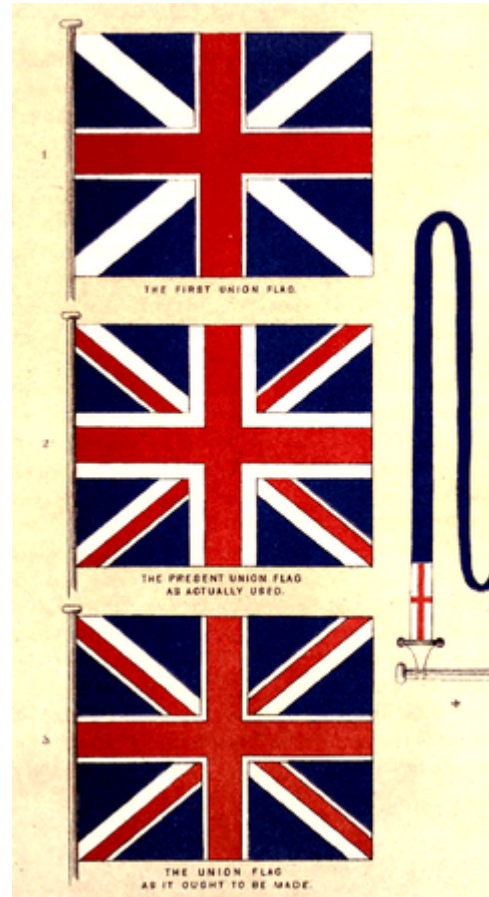
Some years ago I called the attention of the Admiralty to this extraordinary blunder, and I pointed out then, just what Mr. Laughton has done in his recent lecture, that the flag, as made, really shows two crosses in the centre. The Admiralty referred the matter to Garter King of Arms, but Sir Albert Woods, while he did not say a word in defence of the arrangement, would not interfere. "The flag," he said, "was made according to the drawing,"—which was too true—"and it was exhibited," he added, "in the same way on the colours of the Queen's infantry regiments;" and, naturally enough, he declined the responsibility of advising a change. And so it remains. I may observe, however, that in one, at least, of the Horse Guards' patterns, the arrangement of the tinctures is not, as Sir Albert supposes, according to the original drawing, and it is different from the pattern prescribed by the Admiralty. I refer to the flag prescribed for the use of military authorities "when embarked in boats or other vessels." In that flag, of which an official copy is now before me, the fimbriation of the Irish saltire is of much greater breadth than it is in the Admiralty flag, while that saltire itself is considerably reduced in breadth.

Besides the error in the border of the St. George's cross, the breadth of the Irish saltire in all our flags, as now manufactured, is less than that of the white cross of Scotland, which is clearly wrong. For obvious reasons, and according to the written blazon, they ought to be the same. Indeed, all the three

crosses ought to be of the same breadth. So great, however, is the difference in practice, that in the official Admiralty Directions for the construction of a flag of given dimensions, while the St. George's cross is appointed to be 18 inches in breadth, that of St. Andrew is to be only 9 inches, and the Irish cross only 6—this last being exactly the same as the breadth appointed for the border of the cross of St. George!

Figure II. of Plate III. shows the flag as made according to the erroneous pattern now in use. Figure III. shows it as it ought to be, and as it is appointed to be made by the distinct terms of the verbal blazon, in the order by the king in council. But the breadth of the St. George's cross I have left unaltered.

It is to be hoped that heraldic propriety will prevail over a practice originating in obvious error, and that our national flag will be flown according to its true blazon. The correction would be very easily made. The reduction of the breadth of the border of St. George's cross and the slight increase in the width of the Irish saltire would be little noticed, while, besides correcting obvious errors, it would have the advantage of bringing the flag, in one important respect, into conformity with the design as represented on the coinage. On the reverse of our beautiful bronze coins the St. George's cross on Britannia's shield is fimbriated as it ought to be, that is, by the narrow border prescribed by the written blazon.



UNION FLAGS AND PENDANT. PLAT



Fig. 27.

But if the penny is right in that respect, it exhibits another extraordinary example of our slipshod heraldry, by a variation of a different and more startling kind. My complaint against the flag, as made, is, that it represents four crosses, but on the penny there are only two. This was all right when the design was first made in the reign of Charles II., but when the third cross was added to the flag the three crosses should have appeared on the coin. A desire to adhere to the original design cannot certainly be pleaded, for there have been many changes in this figure of Britannia. She was first placed there by Charles II. in honour of the beautiful Duchess of Richmond, who sat to the sculptor for the figure. But her drapery on the coin of those days was very scanty, and her semi-nude state was hardly in keeping with the stormy waves beside which she was seated. Queen Anne, like a modest lady as she was,

put decent clothing on her, and made her stand upright, and took away her shield, crosses and all. In the subsequent reigns she was allowed to sit down again, and she got back her shield, with the trident in her left hand and an olive-branch in the right. On the present coinage—a copy of which (the penny) is shown in Fig. 27—the drapery of Queen Anne is retained, but the figure is entirely turned round, and faces the sinister side of the coin, instead of the dexter, as at first, and the olive-branch (*absit omen*) has been taken away. But with all these changes there remain only two crosses on the shield. The reader will naturally suppose, however, that the omission consisted in not adding the Irish saltire to that of Scotland, which had been there from the first. But no. In this instance there was certainly no "injustice to Ireland," for the extraordinary thing is, that the St. Andrew's cross has been taken away altogether, and the saltire of Ireland, distinguished by its fimbriated border, has been put in its place, Scotland being not now represented on the coin at all. Of course this has arisen from mere carelessness at the Mint, but it is an error which ought to be at once corrected.

THE UNION JACK.

But to return to our flags. The Union Jack is a diminutive of the Union. It is exclusively a ship flag, and, although of the same pattern as the Union, it ought never to be called the Union *Jack* except when it is flown on the jack-staff,—a staff on the bowsprit

or fore part of a ship. It is extraordinary how little this distinction is understood. For example, in the Queen's Regulations for the army a list of stations is given at which it is directed that "the national flag, *the Union Jack*, is authorized to be hoisted." And in a general order issued from the North British Head Quarters as to the arrangements to be observed on a recent occasion of the sitting of the General Assembly in Edinburgh, it was stated that "the Union Jack" would be displayed from the Castle and at the Palace of Holyrood. But the *Union Jack* is never flown on shore. The proper name of the national flag is *the Union*. It is the shore flag, and, except personal flags, the only one which is displayed from fortresses and other stations.

At the Royal Arsenal and a few other stations the Union flag is displayed daily. At others, such as Sandgate Castle and Rye, it is flown only on anniversaries. At Tilbury, Edinburgh Castle, and other places, it is hoisted on Sundays and anniversaries. And there are similar rules for foreign stations.

On board her Majesty's ships the Union is sometimes displayed, but only on special occasions. It is hoisted at the mizen top-gallant-masthead when the Queen is on board, the Royal Standard and the flag of the Lord High Admiral being at the same time hoisted at the main and fore top-gallant-mastheads respectively. And an Admiral of the Fleet hoists the Union at the main top-gallant-masthead. The Army Regulations, however, referring to the presence of the Queen on board ship, again confound the two flags, and prescribe that a salute shall be fired by forts whenever a ship passes showing the flags which indicate the presence of the sovereign, and among

these is specified "*the Union Jack* at the mizen top-gallant-masthead." If the commandant of a fortress acted on this, her Majesty might pass every day of the year without a salute, as he would certainly never see the Union *Jack* in that position. The mistake is the more curious as the Regulations elsewhere distinguish the Union Jack from the Union by speaking of the latter as the "Great Union."

The Jack when flown from the mast with a white border is the signal for a pilot. In this case it is called the Pilot Jack. When flown from the bowsprit of a merchant ship it must also have a white border.

It has been said that the term "Jack" is derived from the name of the sovereign James I. (*Jacques*), in whose reign it was constructed. This is the legend at the Admiralty, but it is of doubtful authority. The Oxford Glossary says there is not a shadow of evidence for it, and traces the word to the surcoat worn of old by the soldiery called a *jacque*—whence jacket. But this also is doubtful.

The Union, or junction of the three crosses, is used in other cases in the royal navy, and also in the merchant service, not by itself, but in certain combinations.

THE ENSIGN.

The flag under which all our ships now sail is the Ensign.

In early times every chieftain or knight, whether serving in the field or on board ship, had his own distinguishing flag, and if several knights were embarked in one ship, the ship carried the flags of them all. In one of the illuminations of the reign of Henry VI., the sides of a ship are covered with shields, and in other examples armorial devices are even shown painted on the sails. When engaged in any active service, a ship would carry also the flag of the leader or admiral, and, in addition to this, the emblem of some patron saint, depending in this on the caprice or superstition of the owner. Besides these a ship usually bore the flag of her port—a usage which, so far as merchant ships are concerned, still holds among us in the practice of carrying what are known as "house flags," though now strictly subordinated to that of carrying the national ensign. With ships of other countries the usage continued till comparatively lately. In France, down to the Revolution, merchant ships flew the flag of their port more commonly than the flag of France; as for instance, of Marseilles, white with a blue cross; or of Dunkirk, barry of six argent and azure, with the alternative of the old English white ensign, white with a small St. George's cross in the upper corner next the hoist, derived from the English sovereignty in the seventeenth century.[39] In the same way in the Baltic: in the Netherlands almost every port had its own flag, and the free towns of Germany till quite recently followed the same practice. It was the same in England in early times—a sailor being more a sailor of his port than of his country.

[39] Laughton's *Heraldry of the Sea*.

Now, as a rule, the ships of all countries sail under their national colours. With us the flag under which

all our ships sail is the Ensign, of which there are three—the white, the blue, and the red. It is a large flag of one of the colours named, with the Union in a square or canton at the upper part of the hoist. I may explain that the portion of a flag next the staff or rope from which it is flown is called the hoist, the next is called the centre, and the outer portion the fly. Besides the Union in the canton, the white ensign has the St. George's cross extending over the whole field.

Although the Union flag of Great Britain was appointed by royal order in 1606, it was not inserted in the Ensign till 1707. Previous to that the Ensign bore only the English cross in the canton.

In the royal navy, not always, but for some time previous to 1864, the fleet consisted of three divisions called the White, the Blue, and the Red Squadrons, each carrying its distinctive Ensign, and, latterly, each having its admiral called after the colour of his flag. But till 1805 there was no admiral of the Red. Previous to that the admiral commanding in the centre flew at the main, not the red flag, but the Union.

The first notice of the division of the fleet appears in a MS. report by Mr. Pepys, secretary to the Admiralty, in which it is stated that in the Duke of Buckingham's expedition against the Isle of Rhé in 1627 the fleet was thus divided. The notice is interesting:—"The Duke now lying at Portsmouth divided his Fleete into squadrons. Himselfe, Admirall and Generall in Chiefe, went in y^{e} Triumph, bearing the standard of England in y^{e} maine topp, and Admirall particular of the bloody colours. The Earle of Lindsay was vice-Admirall to the Fleete in the

Rainbowe, bearing the king's usual colours in his fore topp, and a blew flag in his maine topp, and was admiral of the blew colours. The Lord Harvey was Rear Admirall in y^{e} Repulse bearing the king's usual colours in his mizen, and a white flag in the maine topp, and was Admirall of y^{e} squadron of white colours." In this instance it will be observed the blue flag took precedence of the white. Under the Commonwealth the blue was put down to the third place, and when on the Restoration the Union flag was reintroduced, the precedence of the three colours remained as it had been determined by the Commonwealth. The arrangement of the fleet into three divisions continued till 1864; but it often proved puzzling to foreigners, and it was found inconvenient in action. It was for this last reason that Lord Nelson, on going into action at Trafalgar, ordered the whole of his fleet to hoist the White Ensign, and it was under that flag that that great victory was gained.

During the wars of the seventeenth century the Dutch fleets were also divided into three squadrons, distinguished, like the English, by the three colours—orange or red, white, and blue, and both with them and in our own service this was perhaps necessary when fleets consisted of such a large number of ships—our own numbering often as many as 200 sail. Latterly, when fleets were comparatively so much smaller, the distinctive colours became of less importance, and in 1864 the classification was discontinued. Now the White Ensign only is used by all her Majesty's ships in commission. Previous to this it had been ordered by royal proclamation, in 1801, that merchant ships should fly only the Red Ensign, and this is still the rule; but since the three divisions of the fleet were abolished, the Blue Ensign

is allowed to be used by British merchant ships when commanded by officers of the Royal Naval Reserve, provided one-third of the crew be men belonging to the Reserve. By permission of the Admiralty the Blue Ensign is also allowed to be used by certain yacht clubs; and the members of one club—the Royal Yacht Squadron—have liberty to use the White Ensign.

SPECIAL FLAGS.

The flag of the Lord High Admiral is crimson, having on it an anchor and cable, and it is hoisted on any ship of which that high officer is on board. It is also hoisted at the fore top-gallant-masthead of every ship of which the Queen may be on board. The flag of an admiral is white with the cross of St. George on it. It is only flown by an admiral when employed afloat, and then at the main, fore, or mizen top-gallantmast-head, according as he is a full, vice, or rear admiral.

The Union flag and the Blue Ensign are, with the addition of certain distinctive badges, used as personal flags by certain high officers, and also in particular departments of the service. For example, the flag of the Lord-lieutenant of Ireland is the Union with a blue shield in the centre, charged with a golden harp. The Governor-general of India has the Union with the Star of India in the centre surmounted by a crown, and this also is the flag of

British Burmah. British ministers, chargés d'affaires, fly the Union with the royal arms in the centre within a circle argent surrounded by a wreath. Our consuls have the Blue Ensign with the royal arms in the fly. There are also differences in the Union or Ensign with distinctive badges for other offices and departments, and for the Colonies.

THE PENDANT.

The Pendant is a well-known flag in ships of war. It is of two kinds, the long and the broad. The first is a long, narrow, tapering flag—the usual length being twenty yards, while it is only four inches broad at the head. An Admiralty Memorandum regarding the history of our flags bears that the origin of the long Pendant is generally understood to have been this:—After the defeat of the English fleet under Blake, by the Dutch fleet under Van Tromp, in 1652, the latter cruised in the Channel with a broom at the mast-head of his ship, to signify that he had swept his enemies off the sea. In the following year the English fleet defeated the Dutch, whereupon the admiral commanding hoisted a long streamer from his mast-head to represent the lash of a whip, signifying that he had whipped his enemies off the sea. Hence the Pendant, which has been flown ever since. This certainly has been the popular tradition, and the English admiral may, on the occasion referred to, have adopted a flag of the description and for the purpose mentioned, but it was not altogether a new

form of flag. In the Tudor MS. we find a description of a long tapering flag of somewhat the same description. It is called a Streamer, and is appointed to "stand in the top of a ship or in the forecastle, and therein is to be put no armes but a man's conceit or device, and may be of length 20, 30, 40, or 60 yards, and is slitt as well as a guydhomme or standard." From this description the streamer would appear to have been a personal flag bearing "the conceit or device"—crest, badge, or motto—of the owner.

As now used in our navy the long pendant is of two colours—one white with a red cross in the part next the mast; the other blue with a red cross on a white ground. The first is flown from the mast-head of all her Majesty's ships in commission, when not otherwise distinguished by a flag or broad pendant. The other is worn at the masthead of all armed vessels in the employ of the government of a British colony. (See Plate III. No. IV.)

The broad pendant or "burgee" is a flag tapering slightly and of a swallow-tailed shape at the fly. It is white with a red St. George's cross, and is flown only by a commodore, or the senior officer of a squadron, to distinguish his ship. If used by a commodore of the first class it is flown at the main top-gallant-masthead. Otherwise it is flown at the top-gallant-masthead.

SIGNALS AND OTHER FLAGS.

Signal flags are those which are used for

communication between ships at sea. In the system instituted by James II. intelligence was communicated or messages interchanged by a confused number of flags exhibited at different parts of the ship. Now, signalling has been reduced to a complete system. The flags are of various shapes and colours, each flag representing a letter or number, and by a recent arrangement a universal code has been adopted by which vessels of different nations can now communicate.

A flag of truce is white, both at sea and on land, but on board ship it is customary to hoist with it the national flag of the enemy—the white flag at the main and the enemy's ensign at the fore. On one occasion during the war in 1814 when the French frigate *Clorinde* was about to be attacked by the British frigate *Dryad*, the commander of the former, being desirous to ascertain what terms would be granted in case he surrendered, hoisted French colours aft and English colours forward. Under cover of this the French frigate sent a boat with the message. The answer was a refusal to grant any terms, but the boat was allowed to return to the French frigate in safety before the *Dryad* filled and stood towards her.

The Ensign and Pendant at half-mast are the recognised signs of mourning. Sometimes also it is an expression of mourning to set the yards at what seamen call "a-cock-bill," that is all the yards topped up different ways on each mast; but this is chiefly done by foreigners, who, on Good Friday and other occasions, set their yards thus. It is also customary as a sign of mourning to paint the white lines of a ship of a blue colour. In older times, when ships were more gaudily painted and gilded than they are now,

they were painted black all over as a sign of mourning.

The red or bloody flag is a signal of mutiny, and as such it was displayed in our own navy on two noted occasions in the end of last century, when the fleet at Spithead mutinied, and afterwards that at the Nore. In the latter case the mutineers hauled down the flag of Vice-admiral Buckner and in its stead hoisted the red flag. It is a singular fact, however, and characteristic of the British seaman, that on the 4th of June, the king's birth-day, while the mutiny was at its height, the whole fleet, with the exception of one ship, evinced its loyalty by firing a royal salute, and displaying the colours usual on such occasions, the red flag being struck during the ceremony, and only re-hoisted when it was over.[40]

[40] James' *Naval History*, ii. p. 73.

The yellow flag is the signal of sickness and of quarantine.

USE OF FLAGS IN NAVAL WARFARE.

Such are the principal naval flags. Of the circumstances in which they may or may not be legitimately used, especially in naval warfare, some interesting stories might be told.

Although it is prohibited to merchant ships to carry the colours used in the navy, this may be done

in time of war to deceive an enemy. I may mention one instance when it was practised with happy effect. In the French war in 1797 the French Rear-admiral Sarcy, when cruising with six frigates in the Bay of Bali, came in sight of five of our Indiamen—one of them, the *Woodford*, Captain Lennox. They were homeward bound, and all richly laden, and to all appearance they had no chance of escape, when Captain Lennox rescued them by an act of great judgment and presence of mind. He first of all hoisted in his own ship a flag which the French admiral knew well—that of the British Admiral Rainier, blue at the mizen, and he made all the other ships in his company hoist pendants and ensigns to correspond. But he did more. He detached two of the Indiamen to chase and reconnoitre the enemy; and as these advanced towards the French reconnoitring frigate the *Cybèle*, the latter, completely deceived, made all sail to join her consorts with the signal at her mast-head—"The enemy is superior in force to the French." On this the French admiral, believing that he was in the presence of a powerful British squadron, made off with his frigates under all sail, and Captain Lennox and his consorts completed their voyage in safety. When Admiral Sarcy discovered afterwards the ruse that had been practised on him, and which had lost him a prize of such great value, his mortification may be imagined.

In going into action it is the custom with the ships of all nations to hoist their national colours. Nelson at Trafalgar carried this to excess, for he hoisted several flags lest one should be shot away. The French and Spaniards went to the opposite extreme, for they hoisted no colours at all, till late in the action, when they began to feel the necessity of having them to strike.[41] Nelson on that occasion

ran his ship on board the *Redoubtable*, a large seventy-four gun ship, and fought her at such close quarters that the two ships touched each other. Twice Nelson gave orders to cease firing at his opponent, supposing she had surrendered, because her great guns were silent, and as she carried no flag there was no means of instantly ascertaining the fact. It was from the ship which he had thus twice spared that Nelson received his death wound. The ball was fired from the mizen-top, which, so close were the ships, was not more than fifteen yards from the place where he was standing. Soon afterwards the *Redoubtable*, finding further resistance impossible, hoisted her flag, only to haul it down again in sign of surrender, within twenty minutes after the fatal shot had been fired. In this great battle each of the Spanish ships had in addition to her ensign a large wooden cross hung to the end of her spanker boom.

[41] Southey's *Life of Nelson*.

When a ship surrenders the fact is usually intimated by her hauling down her flag, but in Lord Cochrane's spirited attack on the French fleet in Basque Roads in 1809, two of the French ships, the *Varsovie* and *Aquilon*, made the token of submission by each showing a Union Jack in her mizen chains; and in other instances during the war French ships hoisted a Union Jack as the signal of their having struck.

Of course when a ship has surrendered the fire of both ships ceases. In an action off Lissa between British ships and a Franco-Venetian squadron, the French ship *Flore* surrendered to the British frigate *Amphion*. Immediately afterwards the Venetian frigate *Bellona* bore up and commenced a heavy fire against the *Amphion*, and some of the shot struck the captured ship on the other side. Supposing, erroneously, that the shot came from the British ship, one of the officers of the *Flore*, in order to make more clear the fact of her having absolutely surrendered, took the French ensign, halliards and all, and holding them up in his hand over the taffrail to attract the attention of the *Amphion's* people, threw the whole into the sea. Having captured the *Bellona* also, the captain of the *Amphion* temporarily left the surrendered ship while he pursued another of the enemy, the *Corona*, which he also captured. When thus engaged, however, he was mortified to see his first prize, the *Flore*, notwithstanding her emphatic act of submission, dishonourably stealing away, and she actually effected her escape into the harbour of Lessina. Captain Hoste, who commanded the British squadron, afterwards sent a letter by a

flag of truce to the captain of the *Flore*, demanding restitution of the frigate in the same state as when she struck her flag and surrendered to the *Amphion*; but the commander of the French squadron replied by a letter, neither signed nor dated, denying that the *Flore* had struck, and falsely asserting that the colours had been shot away. The letter was sent back and the demand repeated, but no answer was returned.

I may mention another instance in which captured colours were thrown into the sea in token of surrender under different circumstances, but not more creditable to the vanquished party. In the war between America and the Barbary States in the early part of the century, the United States schooner *Enterprise*, under the command of Lieutenant Sterrett, fell in with and engaged a Tripolitan polacre ship, and in the course of the action the colours of the latter were either shot away or struck—in all probability the latter, for the Americans believed she had surrendered and quitted their guns. The Corsair, however, re-hoisted her flag and continued the action. Thereupon the *Enterprise* poured in so destructive a fire that her opponent this time unequivocally hauled down her colours, and Lieutenant Sterrett ordered her under his lee quarter. This order was obeyed, but the Tripolitan, when he got there, thinking his position favourable, re-hoisted the red flag, and having poured another broadside into the *Enterprise*, prepared to board. The Americans, justly incensed at this treacherous act, delivered a raking broadside which effectually terminated the affair. The Tripolitan captain now abjectly implored the quarter which he had justly forfeited, and bending over the waist barricade of his ship, and as an indication of his sincerity, raised his

colours in his arms and threw them into the sea.

In contrast to the conduct of the captain of the *Flore* in carrying off his ship after he had surrendered, may be mentioned the very different course taken by the officer in command of a French 40-gun frigate, the *Renommée*, which was captured off Madagascar in 1811, after an action between a French squadron, and a British squadron under Captain Schomberg. From the state of the British ships after the action, Captain Schomberg, when night was coming on, could only send on board the prize a lieutenant of marines and four seamen, in a sinking boat. At this time the *Renommée* had a crew of nearly 400 effective officers and men, and they could have had at once retaken the ship and got off during the night. The crew wished to do so, but Colonel Barrois, who—the captain having been killed—was now, according to the etiquette of the French service, the commanding officer, acting on a high principle of honour, refused to give his sanction, as they had surrendered by striking their flag. The lieutenant and his few hands remained accordingly in quiet possession of the prize, till the prisoners were taken out next morning, and a proper prize crew placed on board.

When an action takes place at night, when flags cannot be seen, other modes of intimating surrender have to be reverted to. In the war with America, in 1815, when a British ship in a disabled state found she had no alternative but to surrender at midnight to an American ship of superior force, she did so by firing a lee gun and hoisting a light. In another case a French frigate, the *Néréide*, after a severe action during night with the British frigate *Phœbe*, surrendered to the latter by hauling down a light she

had been carrying, and hailing that she surrendered. In another case a French ship intimated the fact of her surrender by hoisting a light and instantly hauling it down.

When a ship has surrendered and is taken possession of, the captor hoists his ensign over that of the enemy. In one instance a mistake in this produced disastrous results. In the celebrated capture of the *Chesapeake* off Boston in 1813, when the American flag was struck, the officer of the *Shannon* who was sent on board the *Chesapeake* to take possession, inadvertently—owing to the halliards being tangled—bent the English flag below the American ensign instead of above it. By this time the two ships were drifting apart, and when the *Shannon's* people saw the American stripes going up first they concluded that their boarding party had been overpowered, and at once reopened their fire, by which their first-lieutenant and several of their own men were killed. The mistake was discovered before the flags had got halfway to the mizen peak, when they were hauled down and hoisted properly. In this brilliant but short action—for between the discharge of the first gun and the conclusion of the fight only fifteen minutes elapsed—the American ship, by way of display, carried more than the ordinary number of flags. She flew three ensigns, one at the mizen, one at the peak, and one, the largest of all, in the starboard main rigging. She had besides, flying at the fore, a large white flag inscribed with the words "Sailors' Rights and Free Trade," with the intention, it was supposed, of damping the energy of the *Shannon's* men by this favourite American motto. The *Shannon* had the Union at the fore and an old rusty blue ensign at the mizen peak, and besides these she had one ensign on the main stay and

another in the main rigging, both rolled up and "stopped" ready to be cast loose in case either of the other flags should be shot away.

A similar display of flags occurred on the occasion of the encounter off Valparaiso in 1814 between the British 36-gun frigate *Phœbe* and the United States 32-gun frigate *Essex*, which resulted in the capture of the latter. Captain Porter, who commanded the American ship, made an attempt, as in the case of the *Chesapeake*, on the loyalty of the *Phœbe's* seamen, by hoisting at his fore top-gallant-mast head the stock motto, "Free Trade and Sailors' Rights." This, in a short time, the British ship answered with the St. George's ensign and the motto, "God and Country—British sailors' best rights: Traitors offend them." Subsequently the *Essex* hoisted her motto flag at the fore, and another on the mizen mast, with one American ensign at the mizen peak and a second lashed on the main rigging. Not to be outdone in decorations the British ship hoisted her motto flag with a profuse display of ensigns and union jacks, and all these were flying when the American ship was captured.

To hoist false colours in time of war in order to entice an enemy within reach has always been considered legitimate, but it is not allowable to engage, or to commit any hostile act, under them. While it is considered legitimate to mislead, however, it is not legitimate to cheat. An example of what might appear to be a distinction without a difference is afforded by a case which occurred in 1783, when the French ship *Sybille*, a powerful 36-gun frigate, was sighted off Cape Henry by the *Hussar* of 28 guns. The *Sybille* had, a few days before, had a drawn fight with one of our ships of the same

force, and, in consequence of injuries she had then received, had been dismasted in a puff of wind, and was under jury masts. As she was unable to chase the *Hussar*, she sought to entice her alongside, in order to take her by boarding, and accordingly she hoisted at the peak the French ensign under the English, as if she had been captured. All this was legitimate, and the *Hussar* might or might not have been deceived by it. But the French captain did something more. He hoisted in the main shrouds an English ensign reversed, and tied in a weft or loop. Now this was a well-known signal of distress—an appeal to a common humanity, which no English officer was ever known to disregard, and the *Hussar* closed at once. But fortunately her crew were at quarters, and the *Sybille*, hauling down the English flag at the peak and hoisting the French above, endeavoured to run her on board. Her extreme rolling, however, steadied by no sufficient sail, exposed her bottom, and several shots from the *Hussar* went through her very bilge. By this time another of our ships, the *Centurion* of 50 guns, had come up, and the *Sybille* struck her flag—the reversed ensign with its weft, so dishonourably hoisted, remaining in the main shrouds. The English officer who took possession sent the French captain on board the *Hussar*, and he presented his sword to Captain Russell on the quarterdeck. Russell took the sword, broke it across, and threw it on the deck; and sending the Frenchman below, kept him in close confinement in the hold till his arrival in port some days later.[42]

[42] Laughton's *Heraldry of the Sea*.

I may mention another case where a legitimate ruse was successfully practised on an enemy by our great naval commander, Lord Cochrane. It occurred

in the early part of his brilliant career, when he was cruising in the Mediterranean in his little brig the *Speedy*. This small craft, under her daring and skilful commander, had made herself so much an object of terror by the many captures she had made that a Spanish frigate, heavily armed, was fitted out and sent after her. In order to get near the *Speedy* the Spaniard was disguised as a merchantman. For the same reason, Lord Cochrane, to lull suspicion and enable him to get near the merchant craft of the enemy, had also disguised his small vessel, and was sailing as a merchant brig under Danish colours. Perceiving the supposed Spanish merchantman, Lord Cochrane at once gave chase, and he only discovered his mistake when his formidable antagonist opened her ports and showed her teeth. At the same time the Spaniard lowered a boat to go on board the *Speedy* and see what she was. Discovery and capture were apparently now unavoidable, but Lord Cochrane was equal to the occasion. Hoisting the yellow flag—the dreaded signal of sickness and quarantine—he made straight for the frigate, and, having dressed a petty officer in Danish uniform, on the gangway, he ordered him to hail the boat with the intimation that they were out just two days from Algiers, where it was well known the plague was then violently raging. This was enough. The boat pulled back, and the frigate at once filled and proceeded on her course.

It was a narrow escape; yet the crew of the *Speedy* complained loudly that they had not been allowed to fight the frigate! They had been admirably trained, and had implicit confidence in their brave commander, and thought he was equal to anything. Lord Cochrane was not a man to disregard murmurs uttered in such a direction, and he told them that if

they really wanted a fight they would get it with the first enemy they came across, whatever she might be. They had not long to wait before they fell in with a large Spanish zebec, the *Gamo*, which, to the astonishment of the big ship, Lord Cochrane immediately attacked. A fight with the guns could not have lasted long, for the Spanish ship carried 30 heavy guns with a crew of upwards of 300 men, while the *Speedy* had only 14 four-pounders and a crew of 54 all told. Lord Cochrane, therefore, notwithstanding this immense disparity of force, determined, as his only chance, to board the frigate, and this he succeeded in doing, taking his entire crew with him and leaving only the surgeon at the wheel. A deadly hand-to-hand conflict ensued, when, just as his small band were nearly overpowered, Lord Cochrane ordered one of his men to haul down the Spanish colours. This was promptly done, and the Spaniards—their commander having been killed—thinking that their own officers had struck, ceased fighting, and Lord Cochrane became master of the frigate. How to take care of his numerous prisoners was not a small difficulty, but he succeeded in doing so, and brought his prize safely into Port Mahon. It was one of the most brilliant affairs in the glorious life of this great seaman.

Another interesting example of an enemy's ship being taken in consequence of her colours being hauled down, not by her own officers but by the party assailing, occurred at a much earlier period in an action between the British and Dutch fleets off the English coast. A runaway boy—Thomas Hopson—an apprentice to a tailor in the Isle of Wight, had just before come on board the admiral's ship as a volunteer. In the midst of the action he asked a sailor how long the fight would continue, and was told that

it would only cease when the flag of the Dutch admiral was hauled down. The boy did not understand about the striking of colours, but he thought if the hauling down of the flag would stop the fight it might not be difficult to do. As the ships were engaged yard-arm and yard-arm, and veiled in smoke, Hopson at once ran up the shrouds, laid out on the mizen-yard of his own ship, and having gained that of the Dutch admiral he speedily reached the top-gallant-mast head and possessed himself of the Dutch flag, with which he succeeded in returning to his own deck. Perceiving the flag to be struck the British sailors raised a shout of victory, and the Dutch crew, also deceived, ran from their guns. While the astonished admiral and his officers were trying in vain to rally their crew the English boarded the ship and carried her. For this daring service the boy was at once promoted to the quarter-deck, and he rose to be a distinguished admiral under Queen Anne.

INTERNATIONAL USAGE AS TO FLAGS.

In time of peace it is considered an insult to hoist the flag of one friendly nation over that of another. This has given rise to an order that national flags are not to be used for decoration or in dressing ships. This order has reference more particularly to two flags, which are in ordinary use as signal flags. One of these is the French tricolour, but with the red and

blue transposed; the other is the Dutch flag turned upside down, and there are two pendants to match. An unintentional departure from this rule gave rise to some unpleasantness on one occasion in the early part of this century. On the 23d of April, 1819, the English frigate *Euryalus*, lying at St. Thomas in the West Indies, had dressed ship in honour of St. George's day—the fête of the Prince Regent—and in doing so had made use of the blue, white, and red flag, which four years before had been the national flag of France. A three-coloured pennant hung down from the spanker boom and trailed in the water, and another three-coloured flag was at the lower end of the line pendant from the flying boom. This was observed by the French Rear-admiral Duperré, who was there in the *Gloire*, and he demanded and received apologies for what he conceived to be an insult offered to a flag which had lately been the flag of France, and under which he and many of his officers and men had served.[43]

[43] *Heraldry of the Sea*, p. 28.

If a foreign flag is hoisted on shore—as it often is in compliment to some distinguished stranger—it must have the staff to itself. In 1851, when the queen of Louis Philippe visited Oban, the proprietor of the Caledonian Hotel, at which she resided, in compliment to his visitor, and in ignorance, no doubt, of the proprieties of the case, hoisted the French flag over the Union. This excited the indignation of an old pensioner, John Campbell, who had been a sergeant in the 71st Highlanders—the regiment of Campbell of Lochnell—and he went to the innkeeper and demanded that matters should be put right. As no attention was paid to his remonstrance, he then and there cut down the

French flag, and dared the innkeeper to hoist it again in that manner. The residents in Oban were so pleased with Campbell's spirited conduct that they presented him with a silver-headed stick.

In gun practice it is also held to be an insult to take as a mark the flag of another nation, and sometimes unintentional offence has been given through mistakes about the flags in such circumstances. For the following I am indebted to a distinguished naval officer who was cognizant of the circumstances. Some twenty years ago, when the French had an army of occupation in Syria, and their fleet and ours were lying amicably together at Beyrout, some of the English ships having occasion to practise the men with their rifles, put out their respective targets—which generally consisted of bits of old flags fastened to a stick, and stuck in a small cask anchored off at the required distance—and commenced firing. Presently a boat with a superior officer was seen pulling in hot haste from the French flagship. It afterwards transpired that the boat was conveying a polite request that the English would refrain from firing on the French flag—the officer at the same time pointing to an exceedingly dirty piece of bunting which was being riddled by the bullets from one of her Majesty's ships. "That's not the French flag," was the answer of the English. "Yes, I assure you," the Frenchman replied, "we are nearer than you are, and can see the colours. And, pardon me," he added, "another of your ships is at the present moment, in this Turkish port, firing on the Turkish flag"—pointing at the same time to another target, consisting of a faded bit of red bunting. Inquiries were made, and what had been taken for the Tricolour was found to be a piece of an old condemned Union Jack, that had unfortunately been

nailed on to the staff without due regard to the position of the colours, while the so-called Turkish flag was discovered to be a fragment of an old English red ensign.

To the same naval officer I am indebted for the following amusing incident, which I am glad to give in his own words, as he was personally concerned in it. "About the same time," he writes, "another occurrence of the same kind took place at Larnaca, in Cyprus. It happily ended well, but at one time it looked quite serious. One of our surveying vessels had taken advantage of a lull in the work to practise her crew with her formidable armament of two twenty-four pounders, and on a bright calm Mediterranean morning the gunner was sent for by the senior lieutenant, and directed to prepare a target. But here there arose a difficulty. The ship had been a long time from Malta, stores of all kinds were scarce, and of old bunting there was absolutely none. The gunner was in despair, but a marine came to the rescue, and offered his pocket-handkerchief as a substitute. It was about the usual size of such articles, and as it had been bought at Malta while disturbances were pending at Naples, it had the Italian colours, green, white, and red, together with a pendant, printed on it, and on the white part some patriotic sentences in Italian. The whole presented an ancient and faded appearance, but the gunner accepted it with thanks.

"So it was duly nailed on a staff stuck into a small cask, and anchored about 600 yards to seaward. After the firing from the howitzers was finished the men were ordered to fire on it with rifles, which for a time they did. While this was going on a small French brig happened to be lying in the roads, and

during the forenoon a boat was observed pulling from her in the direction of the target, but it did not venture very close; the firing was not suspended, and nothing further was thought about it. Before going to dinner in the middle of the day, a boat was sent to examine the target to see if it would float, as it was intended to continue the practice in the afternoon, and although it was reported to have been knocked about a good deal, it was thought it might remain afloat as long as it would be required, and so it was left. About an hour afterwards, however, it disappeared, and went to the bottom.

"The lieutenant, who had been weary with his work and had gone to bed early, was much astonished at being sent for by the captain about midnight. A formal despatch from our consul had come on board, inclosing a communication from the French representative giving a detailed account of what was described as a gross insult to the French flag, perpetrated by H.M.S. ——, and demanding all kinds of apologies. The prime mover in the affair, it appeared, was a certain captain Napoleon something, the commander of the little brig. His story was that he had seen with indignation the flag of his country —in size six feet square by his account—carried out by an English man-of-war boat, and deliberately fired upon. He and his crew, he said, had got into their boat determined to rescue the desecrated ensign, 'even at the risk of their lives,' but on getting near they had thought better of it, and pulled ashore instead. Here he had collected all the French residents he could get, whom he harangued, and having persuaded them that the scarcely visible speck was in truth their national flag, he got them to sign a strongly worded protest, and go with it along with him in a body to the French consul. Reparation,

they said, must be made—the insulted flag must be saluted. So great was the excitement and so plausible the story that the French consul, pending negotiations, sent to Beyrout requiring the immediate presence of a French man-of-war. In fact there was all the groundwork of a very pretty row. Meantime the cause of all the commotion was lying at the bottom of the sea, with five or six fathoms of water over it. A written explanation of the circumstance was sent from the ship, and a meeting arranged for next day at the English consulate; and in the meantime a number of boats were sent early in the morning to try and fish up the bone of contention, as without it there was only the English word against the French. At the consulate there was a stormy meeting—much hard swearing and vociferation on the part of the French captain and his crew, with the affidavits of any number of respectable French residents, formally drawn up and signed. Everybody was getting very angry, and prospect of an amicable settlement there was none, when in a momentary lull the English lieutenant asked the French captain—who had for the fiftieth time declared that it *was* a French flag, and six feet square at least—'whether it was likely that he knew more about it than the marine who had blown his nose with it for the last six months.' This in some measure restored good humour. The meeting separated in a more friendly spirit than had at first seemed possible, and when, on the following day, a lucky cast of the grapnel brought to the surface the innocent cause of the disturbance, there was an end of the matter. Torn by bullets, draggled and wet as it was, the wretched handkerchief was borne in triumph to the French consulate, and of course there was no more to be said. The consul made the proper

amende, and the man-of-war, which actually appeared from Beyrout a few hours afterwards to vindicate the honour of the French flag, returned to her anchorage."

I shall just add one more incident of the same kind, for which I am indebted to another naval officer. In 1879 an English corvette visited Tahiti. The island, being under French protection, flies a special flag, and as it is one which is not supplied to English men-of-war, it is usual, when it is necessary for them to salute, to borrow a protectorate flag from the authorities. On the occasion in question, accordingly, the flag was sent off by the governor's aide-de-camp (a naval officer) on the evening of the corvette's arrival at Papeite, and the flag having been hoisted on the following morning, the salute was duly fired. But the display of the flag caused a terrible commotion on shore. On such occasions the whole population turns out to see the salute, and the beach of the beautiful land-locked, or rather reef-inclosed, harbour was crowded with French and Tahitians watching the corvette, which was moored close under the town. The cause of the commotion was that the flag had been improperly made, so that in hoisting it the French ensign, by pure inadvertence, appeared underneath that of Tahiti. The indignation of the French was great, and they hastened to complain to the governor that their flag had been deliberately insulted by her Majesty's ship. The mistake, fortunately, lay entirely with the authorities on shore. It was only on hauling it down that the officer in command found it had been caused by the flag being improperly constructed, the technical explanation being that the distance line had been sewed in, the wrong way, with the taggle towards the bottom of the flag—a very trifling thing in itself,

but which, if unexplained, might have led to serious consequences. Of course the flag was immediately sent to the governor with the explanation, and there was an end of it. So much for naval flags.

FLAGS OF THE BRITISH ARMY.

I have already noticed incidentally some of the flags used in the armies of England in early times. Those used in the latter part of the thirteenth century, and early in the fourteenth, were, besides those of the knights and bannerets, the Royal Standard and the banners of St. George, of St. Edmund, and of St. Edward. Subsequently various changes took place which it is unnecessary to follow.

At present in the British army every regiment of infantry has two flags. They are both made of silk, in this differing from sea flags, which are usually made of bunting. With the exception of the Foot Guards, the first or Queen's colours of every regiment is the Union or National Flag, with the imperial crown in the centre, and the number of the regiment beneath in gold. The second or regimental colours are, with certain exceptions, of the colour of the facing of the regiment, with the Union in the upper corner. The second colours of all regiments bear the devices or badges and distinctions which have been conferred by royal authority. Fig. 28 is a representation of the regimental or second colours of the first battalion of the 24th Regiment, for which I am indebted to the

courtesy of Sir Albert Woods. It will serve as an example of the regimental colours of other regiments. The pole, it will be observed, is surmounted by the royal crest, and this is common to all regiments carrying colours. The ground of the flag is grass green. The crown and wreath are "proper," that is of the natural colours. The scrolls are gold with black letters.



Fig. 28.—Regimental Colours of First Batt

The first or royal colours of the Foot Guards are crimson, and bear certain special distinctions besides those authorized for the second colours—the whole surmounted by the imperial crown. The second, or regimental colours, of the Foot Guards is the Union, with one of the ancient badges conferred by royal authority. The first battalion of the Scots Fusilier Guards possesses the high distinction of carrying on their first colours the royal arms of Scotland.

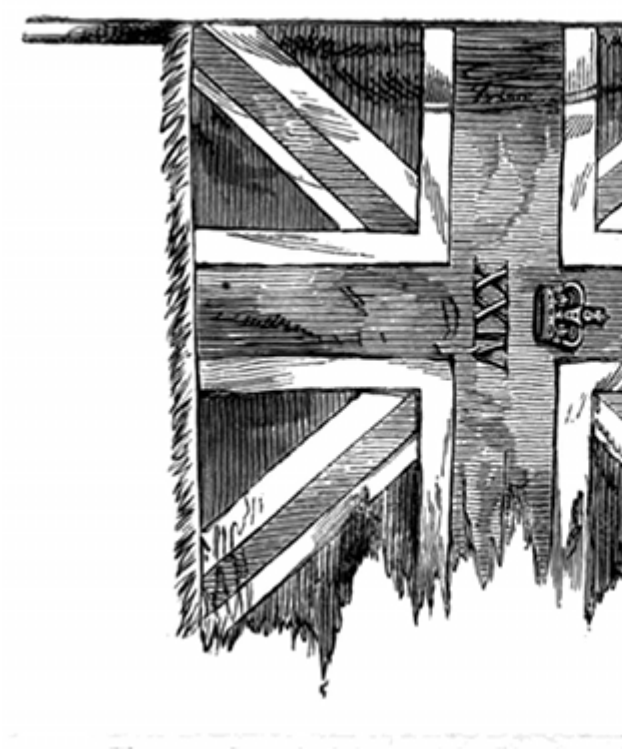


Fig. 29.—Queen's Colours of the First Batt

The colours of infantry are as a rule carried by the two junior lieutenants, and our military annals

present many examples of devoted heroism by the standard-bearers in defence of their charge. Among such incidents few are more interesting than the loss and recovery of the Queen's colours of the first battalion of the 24th Regiment in the African campaign of 1878-79, to which I have already referred. It will be recollected that Lieutenants Melville and Coghill, after crossing the river Tugela with the Queen's colours, were overtaken and attacked by overwhelming numbers and shot down. They died bravely, revolvers in hand, but their pursuers failed to get possession of their precious charge—the colours having been found near them when the bodies were recovered. The Queen was much affected by this incident, and bestowed on the young heroes after death the highest distinction for valour in her power—the Victoria cross. On the arrival of the colours in England the Queen expressed a wish to see them, and they were taken to Osborne, where her Majesty tied on them a small wreath of immortelles as a mark of her deep sense of the heroism of the two young officers who gave their lives to save the flag. Fig. 29 shows the colours in the state in which they were, when presented to the Queen, with the wreath placed upon them by her Majesty.

The colours of the second battalion of the 24th had been left in camp when the troops advanced to meet the Zulus, and they were consequently captured. No trace of them could be found till some time afterwards when the pole with its crown was recovered by a party of the 17th Lancers in a Zulu kraal near Ulundi. This remnant continued to be carried by the regiment for upwards of a year, when new colours were presented to them at Gibraltar on behalf of the Queen by Lord Napier of Magdala. The

old colours, or rather their pole with the crown, were first trooped. The new colours were then uncovered, and, after consecration, presented—Lord Napier stating that her Majesty knew very well that the flag had not been lost through any default of the battalion, but only in consequence of their having been placed in camp when the battalion went to the front under the general commanding.

The presentation of new colours with the accompanying consecration service is an interesting ceremony. As the form may not be generally known, I shall describe a recent one when new colours were presented by the Prince of Wales to the first battalion of the 23d Regiment (the Royal Welsh Fusiliers) on their embarkation for India. It is specially interesting in connection with the history of the old ragged colours which were then superseded. They had been presented by the late Prince Consort thirty-one years before, and in the Crimea they were the first which were planted on the heights of the Alma. Two lieutenants were successively shot while holding them, and they were finally seized by Sergeant O'Connor, who, though wounded, held them aloft and rallied the regiment. For this service he was decorated with the Victoria cross. Shortly afterwards he received his commission, and subsequently he became colonel of the battalion. On the recent arrival of the troops at Portsmouth they were drawn up on the military recreation ground, and the Prince and Princess of Wales having taken their place at the saluting point, the regiment marched past, headed by the goat which always accompanies it. The old colours were then trooped and conveyed to the rear, and three sides of a square having been formed, with a pyramid of the drums in the centre, the new colours were uncased. The royal party then

advanced, and the senior chaplain of the regiment read the Consecration service. The Queen's colours and the regimental colours were then handed to the prince, and he presented them to the two lieutenants who received them kneeling. The prince having spoken a few appropriate words, and the colonel having replied, the colours were saluted by the whole regiment. Another march past, and the presentation of the officers to the prince, concluded the ceremony.

In the cavalry the standards of regiments of Dragoon Guards are of crimson silk damask, embroidered and fringed with gold, and their guidons, anciently called "guydhomme"—a swallow-tailed flag—are of crimson silk. Each is inscribed with the peculiar devices, distinctions, and mottoes of the regiment. The standards and guidons of cavalry are carried by troop sergeant-majors. The Hussars and Lancers have no standards. They were discontinued, for what reason I do not know, by William IV., and their badges and devices are now borne on their appointments. Neither the Royal Engineers nor the Rifles have colours. Neither have the Royal Artillery; nor is it necessary that they should have any on which to record special services, for the Artillery is represented in every action. Their appropriate motto, *Ubique*, is borne on their appointments. None of the Volunteer regiments carries colours.

The queen's and regimental colours always parade with the regiment. On march they are cased, but they are always uncased when carried into action.

For military authorities "when embarked in boats or other vessels," there is, as we have seen, a special

flag. It is the Union with the royal initials in the centre on a blue circle, surrounded by a green garland, and surmounted by the imperial crown.

USE OF FLAGS BY PRIVATE PERSONS.

In regard to the use of the national flag by private persons, there is a positive rule as to marine flags, but none, so far as I am aware, as to its use on shore. I have occasionally seen it flown on shore with a white border, under an impression, apparently, that this difference was necessary, but it is unmeaning, and there is no authority for it. In numberless instances we see one or other of the marine Ensigns hoisted on shore over gentlemen's houses, or used in street decoration on the occasion of public rejoicings; but nothing could be more absurd, as the ensign is exclusively a ship flag.

Any private individual entitled to armorial bearings may carry them on a flag. In such cases the arms should not be on a shield, but filling the entire flag.

The flags and banners represented in works on heraldry have almost invariably a fringe; but this is optional. If a fringe is used it should be composed of the livery colours, each tincture of the arms giving its colour to the portion of the fringe which adjoins it. In the British army the colours of the different regiments are fringed.

FOREIGN FLAGS: FRANCE.

My notice of foreign flags must be short. Those of France and America have naturally most interest for us.

Previous to the Revolution the French can hardly be said to have had a national flag. The colours of the reigning families—changing as they did with each fresh dynasty, as was the case in our own early history—were accepted in the place of national standards, while each regiment in the army followed colours of its own. The celebrated *Chape de Saint Martin de Tours* and the *Oriflamme* of the Abbey of Saint Denis, were, like the labarum of Constantine, ecclesiastical banners, symbolic of the two patrons of Christian France watching over her in her battles. The Chape de Saint Martin was a banner imitating in form a cape or cloak, and was of blue. The Oriflamme was red with a green fringe. By the end of the tenth century this had become the royal standard. In one of the windows of the Cathedral of Chartres (of the thirteenth century) there is a representation of Henri Sieur de Argentin et du Mez, Marshall of France under St. Louis, receiving from the hands of St. Denis a banner which is supposed to be the Oriflamme. Fig. 30 is a copy of this interesting old work of art. The banner, it will be observed, has five points; but in other examples it has only three, each having attached to it a tassel of green silk.

The royal banner of St. Louis was blue powdered with fleurs-de-lis in gold, and these fleurs-de-lis have remained since the eleventh or twelfth century a peculiarly French and royal device. It is indeed one of extreme antiquity, the emblem of a long-forgotten worship—older by many ages than any record of the

doctrine of the Trinity, of which some have supposed this flower to be an emblem.[44]

[44] Laughton's *Heraldry of the Sea*.



Fig. 30.—The Oriflamme, circa 1248.

In the reign of Charles VI. the blue field ceased to be *powdered* with fleurs-de-lis, and was charged with three only—two and one. The white flag which became the standard of the kings of France was probably not introduced till the reign of Henry IV. But there is great confusion in the history of the

French flags, and this is increased by the use of personal colours at sea, which continued among the French to a much later period than among the English. In the colours of the French regiments there has been great variety of design. Under the old monarchy the regimental colours were of two kinds —one was the *drapeau-colonel*, or royal; the other, called *drapeau d'ordonnance*, took its device from the founder of the particular regiment which carried it, or from the province of its origin. A common form of the royal colours was a white cross on a blue field. In other examples, sometimes the cross and sometimes the field were powdered with fleurs-de-lis. In some instances the field was green. The flag displayed by the French in 1789 was a white cross on a blue ground, with one fleur-de-lis at each corner of the field, and the motto "Patrie et Liberté."

The Tricolour was introduced at the Revolution, but the origin of the design is unknown. Possibly a trace of it may be found in an illumination in one of the MS. copies of Froissart. It represents the King of France setting out against the Duke of Brittany, and his majesty is preceded by a man on horseback bearing a swallow-tailed pennon, the first part containing the ancient arms of France, and each of the tails—composed of three stripes—red, white, and green.

For some time after the Revolution the white field was retained. When the three colours came to be used there appears to have been at first no fixed order in arranging them, and in some cases they were placed vertically, and in others horizontally. By a decree in 1790 it was ordained that in the navy the flag on the bowsprit—the jack—should be composed of three equal bands placed vertically, that next the

staff being red, the middle white, and the third blue. The flag at the stem was to have in a canton the jack above described (occupying one fourth of the flag), and to be surrounded by a narrow band, the half of which was to be red and the other blue, and the rest of the flag to be white. In 1794 this flag was abolished, and it was ordered "that the national flag shall be formed of *the three national colours* in equal bands placed vertically, the hoist being blue, the centre white, and the fly red." It would appear, however, that this arrangement was not for some time universally adopted, and that old flags continued to be used. Thus, in the great picture by De Loutherbourg at Greenwich, the French ships are represented as wearing the suppressed flag of 1790; while, in a rare print preserved in the Bibliotheque Nationale at Paris, representing the magnificent ceremony at which the first Napoleon distributed eagles to the troops in 1804, the banners suspended over the Ecole Militaire in the Champ de Mars, where the ceremony took place, show the three colours in fess, that is, in horizontal lines. But the vertical arrangement must have been soon afterwards generally adopted, and this continued to be the flag both of the French army and navy during the Empire. On the return of the king in 1814, and again in 1815, it was abolished, and the white flag restored; but the Tricolour was reintroduced in 1830, and it has remained in use since.[45]

[45] See French Imperial Standard, and National Flag, Plate IV. Nos. 2 and 3.



Fig. 31.

When the Emperor Napoleon assumed the sovereignty of Elba he had a special flag made. It will be recollected that he was allowed to retain the title of emperor, and although the island which comprised his dominions was only sixty miles in circumference, the inhabitants barely 12,000, his household 35 persons, and his entire army only 700 infantry and 60 cavalry, he considered it necessary to have a "national flag." According to Sir Walter Scott, it bore on a white field a bend charged with three bees. But the emperor was preparing another and very different flag for his small army, of which I am able to give a representation from a very rare coloured engraving.[46] It was the tricolour of France, composed of the richest silk with the ornaments elaborately embroidered in silver. It bore the imperial crown with the letter N, and the eagle,

on each of the blue and red portions, with the imperial bees; and over all the inscription, "L'Empereur Napoléon à la Garde Nationale de L'lle d'Elbe." To the staff, the top of which was surmounted by a golden eagle, was suspended a tricoloured sash also richly embroidered in silver. This splendid standard was presented by Napoleon to his guards in Elba shortly before his invasion of France in 1815. On the reverse side there was subsequently embroidered the inscription, "Champ de Mai"—the flag having been a second time presented by the emperor to his guards at that celebrated meeting, a short time before they marched for Waterloo. The standard was captured by the Prussians, and on their entering Paris was sold to an English gentleman who brought it to England.[47]

[46] See Frontispiece.

[47] When the drawing of it was taken it was in the possession of Bernard Brocas, Esq., at Wokefield.



NATIONAL FLAGS AND STANDAI

The lately-abolished Eagle (Fig. 31) was borne as a standard in the French army during the Empire only. It was introduced by Napoleon I., who adopted it from the Romans. The ribbon attached was of silk five inches wide and three feet long, and richly embroidered. After Napoleon's fall the eagles were abandoned, but they were again introduced by

Napoleon III. In consequence of their intrinsic value, they proved in the Franco-German war a much-coveted prize among the Germans, who captured a considerable number of them on the successive defeats of the French. The first Napoleon was very careful of the Eagles. He himself tells us, in one of the conversations at St. Helena, that he established in each regiment two subaltern officers as special guardians of the Eagle. "Ils n'avaient d'autre arme," he says, "que plusieurs paires de pistolets: d'autre emploi que de veiller froidement a bruler la cervelle de celui qui avancerait pour saisir l'aigle."

The Dutch and Russian ensigns have the same tinctures as those of the present French flag, but borne fess ways—that is horizontally. The former has the red uppermost. The latter has *the metal*, the white, uppermost, and the two *colours*, the blue and the red—against all our notions of heraldic propriety—placed together below. (See Dutch and Russian flags, Plate IV. Nos. 6 and 8.)

The Belgian colours adopted in 1831 are arranged as the French, but the colours are black, yellow, and red. (Plate IV. No. 5.) The flag of Prussia is also composed of three stripes-black, white, and red, but arranged horizontally. (Plate IV. No. 4.) The flag of Mexico is arranged like that of France, but the colours are green, white, and red. (Plate IV. No. 10.)

THE AMERICAN FLAG.

The history of the American flag is interesting.

Previous to the Declaration of Independence the different colonies retained the standards of the mother country with the addition of some local emblem. Massachusetts, for example, adopted the pine-tree, a device which was also placed on the coins. In 1775 "the Union with a red field"—a red ensign—was displayed at New York on a liberty poll with the inscription, "George Rex and the Liberties of America;" and it is interesting to note that the first flag adopted as a national ensign by the ships of the United States consisted of the horizontal stripes with which we are familiar, but with the British Union still retained in a canton. This was replaced by the stars on a blue ground. Some of the flags first used—at the time when only twelve states had ratified the articles of convention—bore only twelve stars. On the 14th of August, 1777, Congress resolved "that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes alternately red and white, and that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation." (See Fig. 32.)

It has been said that the design of the flag was derived from arms borne by the family of Washington; but there is no foundation for this. An American writer—with probably as little ground for the statement—says: "the blue field was taken from the Covenanters' banner in Scotland, likewise significant of the League and Covenant of the United Colonies against oppression, and incidentally involving vigilance, perseverance, and justice. The stars were then disposed in a circle symbolizing the perpetuity of the union, as well as equality with themselves. The whole was a blending of the various flags used previous to the war, viz. the red flags of the army and white colours of the floating batteries —the gem of the navy."[48]

[48] Article on "Flags," by H. K. W. Wilcox, New York, *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1873.

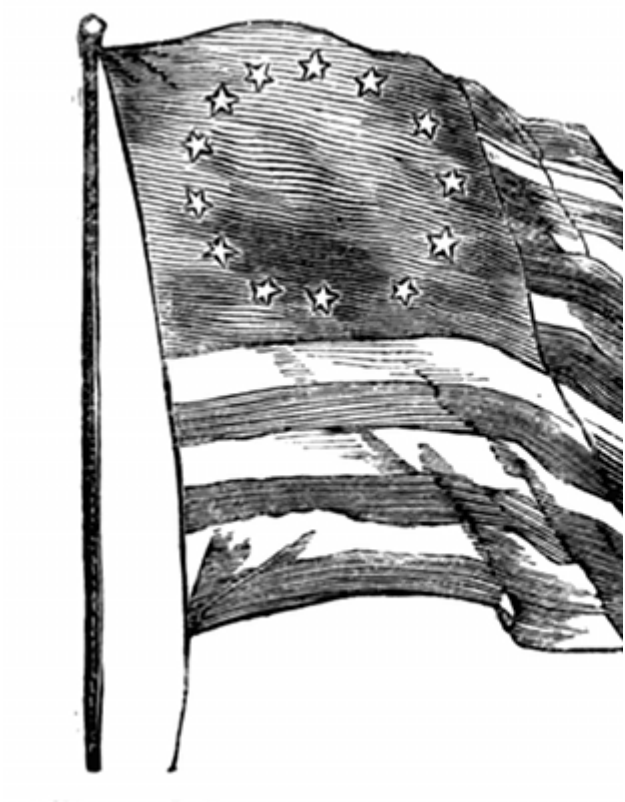


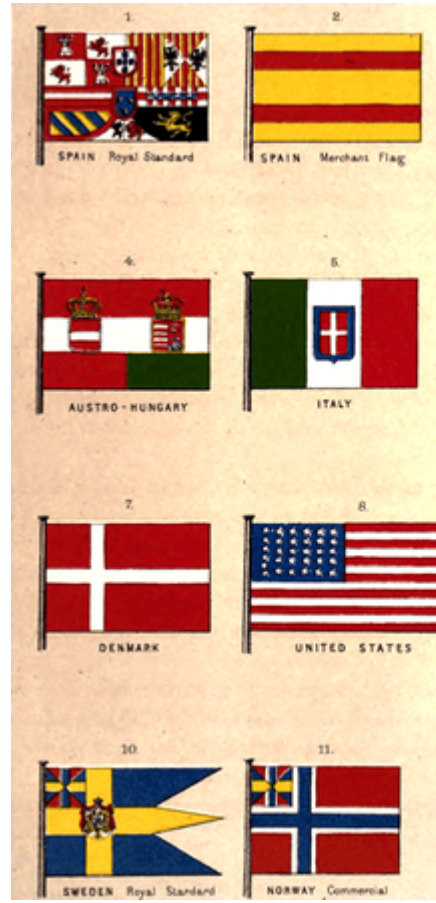
Fig. 32.

In 1795 it was ordained that the stripes should be increased to fifteen and the stars to the same number; but in 1818 Congress ordered a return to the thirteen stripes but with twenty stars, and that on the admission of any new state a star should be added. Thus the old number of stripes perpetuated the original number of the states forming the union,

while the added stars show the union in its existing state. In consequence of the greatly increased number of stars, the circular arrangement had to be abandoned, and they are now disposed in parallel lines. (See flag of the United States, Plate V. No. 8.) The construction of the first national standard, from which the stars and stripes were afterwards adopted, took place at Philadelphia in 1777 under the personal direction of Washington aided by a committee of Congress.

The flag of the American admirals is composed of the stripes alone, and the stars are used separately as a jack. One of the first American flags used at sea, and bearing only the twelve stars, is still preserved. It is the flag which was flown by the celebrated Paul Jones from his privateer, the *Bon homme Richard*, in his engagement with the English ship *Serapis* on 23d September, 1799. In the course of the action the flag having been shot away from the mast-head, Lieutenant Stafford, then a volunteer in Paul Jones' ship, leaped into the sea after it, and recovered and replaced it, being severely wounded while performing this action. The flag thus saved was afterwards presented to him by the marine committee of Congress, and it now (1880) belongs to his son.[49]

[49] Letter in *Daily Telegraph*, 18th March, 1880, by Mr. W. Stafford Northcote.



NATIONAL FLAGS AND STANDA

I may mention that the white and red stripes are not peculiar to the American flag. A flag of similar design was for a long time a well-known signal in the British navy, being that used for the red division to draw into line of battle.

OTHER FOREIGN FLAGS.

The flag of Liberia is very like that of the United States, being composed of red and white stripes with a blue canton. The only difference is that the latter bears only one star. (See the flag of Liberia, Plate V. No. 6.) The flag of Bremen is also composed of red and white stripes.

Spain from the first period of her greatness bore the Castilian flag, quartering Castile and Leon. In an old illumination representing the coronation of Henry, son of John, King of Castile, there are on the king's left hand two men, unarmed, the one holding a banner of Castile and Leon quarterly, the other a blue pennon charged with three kings' heads-the banner of the three kings of Cologne. On his majesty's right hand a man, also unarmed, holds a shield with the arms of Castile and Leon. It was this last device, as a national flag, that was carried by the ships of Columbus. But Columbus had also as a personal flag one given to him by Queen Isabella—a white swallow-tailed pennon bearing a Latin cross in green between the letters FY crowned. These two flags are noteworthy as the first that crossed the Atlantic.

The present royal standard of Spain is of very complicated construction (see Plate V. No. 1), embracing among its bearings the arms of Castile and Leon, of Aragon, Sicily, Burgundy, and others. The national ensign is in marked contrast by its simplicity. It is composed of yellow and red stripes—derived from the bars of Aragon. (See Plate V. No. 2.)

Austria at first bore on her flag the Roman eagle.

Now her war ensign is red, white, and red placed horizontally, and in the centre a shield of the same within a gold border (the arms of the Dukes of Austria), surmounted by the royal crown. (See Plate V. No. 3.) The merchant flag is the same without the shield and crown. The Austro-Hungarian flag has the lower stripe half red and half green, with two shields, one on the right containing the arms of Austria, and the other bearing the arms of Hungary. (See Plate V. No. 4.)

The flag of Italy was designed by Napoleon I. on his declaration of the Kingdom of Italy. It is a modification of the French, the division of the field next the staff being, instead of blue, green, which, it is known, was a favourite colour of the emperor. In the centre is a red shield charged with a white cross —the arms of the Dukes of Savoy, now borne by Italy. A representation of the Italian merchant flag will be found on Plate V. No. 5. The war ensign is the same, except that the shield is surmounted by the royal crown.

In the construction of the flag of Norway, curiously enough, the same blunder has been committed as in our own Union. It is "described" as a blue cross *fimbriated* white; but the border, as the flag is worn, is too broad, and it really represents two crosses, a blue cross superimposed on a white one—just as our St. George's cross, as represented in our national colours, is nothing but a red cross superimposed on a white one. Mr. Laughton accordingly looking at the Norwegian flag in this light, calls it the white flag of Denmark with a blue cross over it,[50] which it was certainly not intended to be. The flag is shown in Plate V. No. 11. The Swedish-Norwegian union in the canton was introduced in 1817, when the two

countries were united under one king.

[50] *Heraldry of the Sea*, p. 23.

The Danish flag (see Plate V. No. 7) is the oldest now in existence. The tradition is that it descended from Heaven ready made in the year 1219 in answer to the prayer of King Waldemar, as he was leading his troops to battle against the pagans of the Baltic. Be that as it may, it certainly dates from the thirteenth century.

The flag of Portugal has borne a conspicuous part in history, and the devices in it carry us back to a very early period. The present royal standard is red with a red shield in the centre charged with towers or castles for the kingdom of Algarve, which Alphonsus III. got from the King of Castile when he married the daughter of the latter in 1278; and in the centre there is a white shield bearing on it the shields of the five Moors placed crossways. The Portuguese national flag is per pale, blue and white, and in the centre point is the same device as appears on the royal standard. The present flag, however, is only a modification of the old flag which was carried by the early discoverers, and which brought glory to Portugal in the days of Prince Henry the Navigator. (See the national flag of Portugal, Plate V. No. 12.)

The royal standards of Norway and Sweden, and also the ensign of these kingdoms, are peculiar in preserving the ancient form of having the fly ending in three points. (See the Swedish standard, Plate V. No. 10.)

Greece has adopted the colours of Bavaria in compliment to her first king. (See Plate VI. No. 7.)

The devices on some of the Asiatic flags are

peculiar. That of Burmah bears a peacock; Siam, a white elephant; and China, a hideous-looking dragon. (See these flags, Plate VI. Nos. 1, 2, 3.) On the flag of Bolivia (Plate VI. No. 4) is the representation of a volcano, suggested in all probability by the great volcano of Serhama, which rises in Western Bolivia to the height of 23,000 feet. Japan, the land of the far east, the source of the sun, as her name signifies, has adopted for her flag the sun rising blood-red. (See Plate V. No. 9.)



The flag of Brazil, which is very inartistic in its construction, bears among other devices the armillary sphere of Portugal. (See Plate VI. No. 8.)

In Plates IV. V. and VI. will be found representations of the flags of other kingdoms and republics. These speak for themselves, and do not call for particular description.

But I must now bring these notices to a close. To the true patriot of every country the national flag must be a subject of pride. If, as a French writer observes, it does not always lead him to victory, it inspires him to fight well, and if need be to die well. "We pay to it," says the same writer, "royal honours. When it is paraded—in rags it may be, and with faded colours, bearing in letters of gold the names of victories—the troops present arms, the officers salute it with the sword, and the white heads of veteran generals are uncovered and bent before the ensign." To the soldier its loss is one of the greatest calamities. In Napoleon's disastrous retreat from Moscow in 1812 not many of his flags remained with the Russians. Of those which were not carried off most were burned, and of some of these the officers drank the ashes. More recently the same thing is said to have been done at Metz and Sedan. So a French writer tells us, and he characterizes the act as "*communion sublime*!"

What the flag is, indeed, to the sailor and the soldier, whether when shaken out in battle or when displayed in memory of great victories, none but the soldier and the sailor can realize. At the interment of Lord Nelson, when his flag was about to be lowered

into the grave, the sailors who assisted at the ceremony ran forward with one accord and tore it into small pieces, to be preserved as sacred relics. "I know," says Charles Kingsley—in those *Brave Words* which he addressed to our soldiers then fighting in the trenches before Sebastopol, "I know that you would follow those colours into the mouth of the pit; that you would die twice over rather than let them be taken. Those noble rags, inscribed with noble names of victory, should remind you every day and every hour that he who fights for Queen and country in a just cause is fighting not only in the Queen's army but in Christ's army, and that he shall in no wise lose his reward."

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Errors in punctuations and inconsistent hyphenation were not corrected unless otherwise noted.

On page 55, "Andrews" was replaced with "Andrew's".

On page 71, "top-gallantmast-head" was replaced with "top-gallant-masthead".

On page 73, two instances of "top-gallantmast head" were replaced with "top-gallant-masthead".

On page 96, "buntin" was replaced with "bunting".

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