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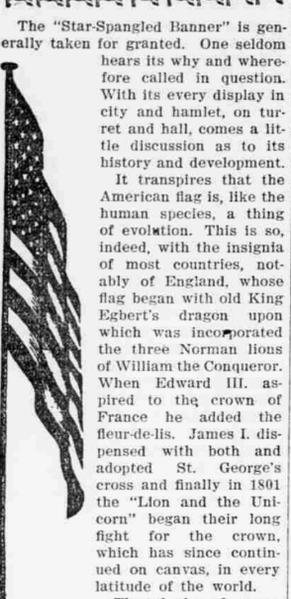
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OUR FLAG.
On history's crimson pages, high up on the roll of fame, The story of Old Glory burns, in deathless words of flame. It is the old red, white and blue, proud emblem of the free, It is the flag that floats above our land of liberty.—Benjamin-Sutton.



The "Star-Spangled Banner" is generally taken for granted. One seldom hears its why and wherefore called in question. With its every display in city and hamlet, on turret and hall, comes a little discussion as to its history and development. It transpires that the American flag is, like the human species, a thing of evolution. This is so, indeed, with the insignia of most countries, notably of England, whose flag began with old King Egbert's dragon upon which was incorporated the three Norman lions of William the Conqueror. When Edward III. aspired to the crown of France he added the fleur-de-lis. James I. dispensed with both and adopted St. George's cross and finally in 1801 the "Lion and the Unicorn" began their long fight for the crown, which has since continued on canvas, in every latitude of the world.

The colonies, of course, lived under the British flag. In 1680 the flag of New England was white, charged with St. George's cross in red surmounted with the crown. In the center was inscribed Jacobus Rex. While Manhattan was in possession of the Dutch the ships waved a flag on which was a beaver, the then insignia of the New Netherlands. 1707 the colonies adopted the Union Jack of Great Britain. This was formed by a combination of St. Andrew's and St. George's crosses, and of course was typical of the fact that the two countries had become one when Queen Elizabeth died and the Scottish king succeeded to the English throne. At the time of our revolt from British authority the Union Jack was in general use, usually bearing some patriotic motto of which "Liberty and Union" was the favorite. Directly after the battle of Lexington a new flag was improvised with the motto of the state of Connecticut, viz., "Qui transiit sustinet." This soon gave way to regimental colors, each being distinctive in shade. At Bunker Hill a blue flag was chosen to designate New England troops—the first sign we see of union in the colonial army. This flag had St. George's cross in one corner. It was growing beautifully less within our limits and soon afterwards disappeared when Gen. Putnam displayed a red banner on Prospect hill with the motto "An Appeal to Heaven." The colony of Massachusetts sent out cruisers in the spring, supplying each with a white flag on which was painted a green pine tree. When armed vessels were commissioned in Washington they were furnished with flags of similar kind.

To Col. William Moultrie of South Carolina is due the honor of raising the first republican flag. It had a white crescent on a blue ground. This was unfurled on the east bastion of the fortress in Charleston harbor, June 28, 1776, while on the opposite side waved the flag called the "Great Union," which had first been raised by Washington at Cambridge. June 14, 1777, the Continental congress, realizing the inappropriateness of longer using British colors, resolved "that the flag of the 13 United States be 13 stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be 13 stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

The first national flag after this pattern was made by a Mrs. Ross, a lady of Philadelphia. She had some distinguished men to assist her, among whom were Benjamin Franklin and Gen. Joseph Reed. We are not informed whether these men, appointed by congress for the purpose, used the thimble, needle and thread that the lady herself employed. From her general character it is probable that Mrs. Ross declined to let them "boss the job," and proceeded in her own way. The 13 stars of the flag of 1777 were arranged in a circle, although there was no officially prescribed form. In 1794, after the admission of Vermont and Kentucky into the union, it was resolved by congress that from and after May 1, 1795, "the flag of the United States be 15 stripes alternate red and white, that the union be 15 stars, white, in a blue field."

No provision was made by this act for future alterations, nor were any changes made till 1818, although a number of new states were admitted meanwhile into the union. On April 4 of that year a bill embodying the suggestions of Capt. Samuel G. Reid, who recommended the reduction of the stripes to the original 13 and the adoption of stars equal to the number of the states, formed into one large star, and a new star to be added on the Fourth of July next succeeding the admission of each new state, was approved by President Monroe, and the flag thus established was afterward hoisted on the hall of representatives.

RAILROAD INTO LIBYAN DESERT.

New Line That Adds Fertile Province to Land of Egypt.

The new railway which is to bring the ancient Oases of Kharga into close relation with Egypt has been opened to the public. The line which is some 200 kilometers in length, and has been constructed under the auspices of the corporation of Western Egypt, starts from Kharga Junction, which is some five miles from Naga-Hamadi, the celebrated sugar center, and proceeds through the most barren country. On the way one passes countless Roman ruins, and the scenery right along is of the most bold, fascinating and varying type. For most of the journey the line follows the old caravan route. A great deal of difficulty was encountered during the construction, owing to the presence of limestone and rocks. In several places the embankment had to be built up to the level of the rocks. This was due to the fact that if the line had pierced the rocks it would have been rendered impassable at certain periods of the year on account of the sand, which drifts with the wind and covers up all apertures on the face of the desert. The work will result in the addition of a new province—that of Western Egypt—to Egypt.

The new province is a most fertile one, and rich in mineral and stone deposits, and although far removed from the usual irrigation area, it is provided with an inexhaustible supply of pure water. Very shortly the corporation will start the construction of a railroad to the neighboring Oasis of Dakhla, were equally valuable products have been found, and where the agricultural prospects are equally encouraging. The Oasis of Kharga was in ancient times called the Oasis of Kenemet, and is best known as the Great Oasis. It boasts a ruined Egyptian temple, consecrated to the god Amen Ra, which was founded by Darius I. Hystaspes in the fifth century B. C. Political offenders were banished to the oases during the Roman occupation, and there are numerous ruins of Roman buildings. There are also the remains of a Roman fort.

It is almost impossible to tell to what extent the two oases will be able to be developed. It is estimated that the Oasis of Kharga has 46,000 feddans (a feddan equals 5,082 square yards) and the Oasis of Dakhla 27,000 feddans of land available for cultivation.

RAILROAD USE OF STEEL.

Lines Take About a Third of Manufactured Product.
Years ago, say up to the past ten years, it was the common estimate that the railroads consumed, in one way or another, about half the iron and steel output of the country. What has been their proportion in the past two years, the greatest in the iron trade's history, with a pig iron production, respectively, of 25,307,191 and 25,781,361 tons? asks the Iron Trade Review.

The totals show that of 19,400,000 gross tons of rolled iron and steel the railroads take about 7,500,000 tons, or a trifle under 39 per cent.; that of some 7,300,000 gross tons of iron and steel castings they take a trifle under 20 per cent., and that of the grand total of all rolled and cast iron and steel, 26,700,000 gross tons, they take 8,900,000 tons, or exactly one-third.

There is no question that 10 or 15 years ago the proportion was more than one-half. Probably it was much more than half, possibly reaching two-thirds. Indeed, we are advised that just recently an official of a prominent steel company made the statement to a representative gathering of iron and steel manufacturers that "the railroads of the country consume about 69 per cent. of the iron and steel products." That statement was absolutely incorrect, but it shows how the old impression has survived through changes in the channels of consumption of which iron and steel manufacturers ought to have kept closer track. The change is due largely to the growth of general demand for the lighter products. Altogether, it would appear that the importance of railroad buying, as foreshadowing the future of the iron and steel trade, is being overestimated in current thought.

Bound to Have Greater Speed.

Leading railroads of the country, in the last ten years, have spent more than \$800,000,000 in their determined fight against time. It is figured that the gain, in all, amounts to something like 13 or 14 hours on schedules. Almost as startling is the assault made upon Father Time by great steamship lines. No sooner does a Deutschland eclipse the ocean record than rival owners set out to build a Lusitania and a Mauretania; when they have captured the blue ribbon of the sea eager competitors plan even a mightier vessel with which to wrest from them the prize. Millions are lightly regarded in the scales as against a few minutes clipped from the record.

Railroad Bridge to Match House.
Before giving his consent to the Great Western railroad to build a railroad bridge across a part of his property a landowner stipulated that it should be constructed of stone which should match that of which his house was built, and should consist of three elliptical arches. The bridge, which has been successfully completed despite the difficulty of construction, is the only one of its kind in England, perhaps in the world.—Railway Magazine.

A GREAT GOLD SCARE

When the Yellow Metal Was First Found in Australia.

AFRAID OF THE CONVICTS.

The English Government Tried to and Did For a Time Suppress the News Because It Feared a General Uprising in the Colony of Criminals.

Gold in Australia was discovered—one might almost be pardoned for saying first discovered—many times. But the news of the earliest discoveries was jealously kept from spreading. The secret of this reticence lay in the presence of the army of convicts which then composed the balance of the population. Had a gold panic broken out it was feared that a general uprising of the prisoners would take place.

Nevertheless the first gold found in Australia was by convicts, in 1811, near Bathurst, New South Wales. The discoverers gathered together a quantity quite sufficient to lead them to believe that they had found a gold mine, but when they reported what they considered their good fortune to the keeper he, instead of undertaking to recommend them for pardon or easing their hard labors in any way, threatened to give them all a sound flogging if they ventured again to say a word about the matter or to spend any more time picking up gold. The next find was made on the Fish river in 1823, not far from the spot where the convicts had come across it nine years before. This news, being reported to the authorities, was also ordered suppressed. Within the course of the next two years finds were so frequent that the London government began to take great interest in the affair. But the fact that another region of the yellow metal might be at the disposal of such as might seek was kept rigidly secret until in 1825 a dramatic incident precluded all possibility of further secrecy.

A convict was discovered with a nugget of gold in his possession. When asked how he had come by the metal, he said that he had picked it up in the bush. He was cautioned and told that the authorities had no doubt that he had stolen the gold, but the prisoner stoutly held to his original tale. At length he was taken out and severely flogged in public as a thief. There is now no doubt that the man told the truth. After this, although the public was every now and then keyed up to great expectations by some reported find, no further veins were discovered until 1839, when a Russian nobleman found a rich deposit in the Blue mountains. The British government again became fearful of the consequence of such news upon a colony of convicts and ordered the matter suppressed. Yet sufficient people had heard of it to keep the story alive and give credence to such rumors as arose from time to time. So matters drifted on. Time and time again bushmen, shepherds, convicts and surveyors picked up small nuggets and brought them to the centers of population, but at that day people were nothing like so keen on gold mining as they subsequently became, and the subject of gold in Australia was not pursued as one would expect it to be.

The discovery of gold in California changed all that. Those rich fields, panning out their golden store and filling the coffers of lucky individuals and governments at a rate never dreamed of, awakened a thirst for prospecting all the world over. In every part of the earth men went out with pick and pan, hoping to come across the precious metal. When the news of California's fortune reached Australia, many took ship to America's shores, and among these was Hammond Hargreaves, an Englishman, native of Gosport, who had emigrated to New South Wales in 1832. In Australia he engaged in farming without much profit and was among the first to rush for California. On reaching the auriferous region the first thing that struck him was the similarity of the geological formation in California and Bathurst, Australia, and there and then he made up his mind to inquire into the subject should he ever return to Australia. He worked for something like a couple of years in California and then set sail for New South Wales. Returning, he of course carried in his mind the thought that perhaps there might be gold in Bathurst, and when he landed he set to work to make a thorough search.

Before this, however, he had made the acquaintance of William and James Toms and J. H. O. Lister, who were anxious to prospect for gold. Hargreaves taught them how to use pick and pan, the dish and the cradle—in fact, gave them a practical if rough education into the mysteries of gold and gold bearing rocks and gravel. These men struck out, and in April, 1851, the three pupils returned to their old master, and, lo, in their pockets they carried gold to the amount of four ounces! Hargreaves, knowing the ropes, took this gold and full directions to the proper quarter. The news went forth, the rush began, rich finds were made, and Hargreaves was hailed as the discoverer of gold in Australia. In reality he had won the title, for it was his knowledge that first educated the Tomses and Lister, and it was his knowledge again that sent them in the right direction.

Duty is what goes most against the grain, because in doing that we do only what we are strictly obliged to and are seldom much praised for it.—La Bruyere.

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