

*Henry J. Morgan*  
1894

## THE BRITISH UNION JACK.



ANKIND, in all the ages and in nearly every land, has shown a desire to have associated with his own identity some peculiar mark or symbol, as an emblem characteristic of his family, his attainments, or his place of residence; and, as a people of one state or commonwealth, a distinctive cognizance or token to perpetuate the remembrance of some valiant deed of arms, or some special act pertaining to the welfare of the community, and which has become national in its significance: typical of the honor and integrity of a country. These insignia—carved in stone, in ivory and in gold, painted on wood, or worked in silk and woollen fabrics—have represented almost everything in the animal and vegetable world, celestial forms, and geometrical figures; yet they were not chosen in an indiscriminate manner and without meaning, but, on the contrary, with due consideration for the appropriateness thereof. The earliest chronicles give evidence of these symbols being worn and used; and the ancients were particularly careful that there should not be any misconstruction of the implied meaning, for nothing was employed that was not truly emblematic. In the 2nd verse of the 2nd chapter of the Book of Numbers, we find these words:—"Every man of the children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign of their father's house." The Romans began the system of a regular code of heraldry; and this was the origin of personal, family, and national devices. Nothing of an emblematic character has played a more conspicuous part, in the history of the world, than the Flag; for, whether it has been as an armorial pennant of the knights-errant of olden times, or as the standard of an Empire in later days, around it has clustered the traditions of nations; the best and the bravest have fought and died to maintain its supremacy, countless thousands have followed without fear where'er it led them, it has inspired hope in the face of despair and time and circumstances have hallowed it and made it sacred. Well may our people of Canada love and bless "The flag that braved a thousand years the battle and the breeze!"

The origin of the British national flag can be traced back to the first Crusade, which took place eight hundred years ago. This great military expedition which left the shores of Europe, in 1096, to struggle for the possession of Jerusalem and the Holy Land (then in the hands of the