

For the EDUCATIONAL REVIEW.]

National Flags Displaying the Cross.

Several of the leading nations of Europe, at the beginning of this twentieth century of the Christian era, bear in their flags and escutcheons the sacred figure of the cross, a symbol of the Christian religion. There are interesting legends, in most cases, in connection with their adoption of this device; but the purpose of this article is merely to describe the cross-bearing flags. Something of the history and geography of Europe is involved in the briefest possible description of these flags and their present use. Where the flags mentioned are not well known, and no colored chart is at hand for reference, they may be learned by following these descriptions with pencil and brush, or by cutting and pasting colored papers.

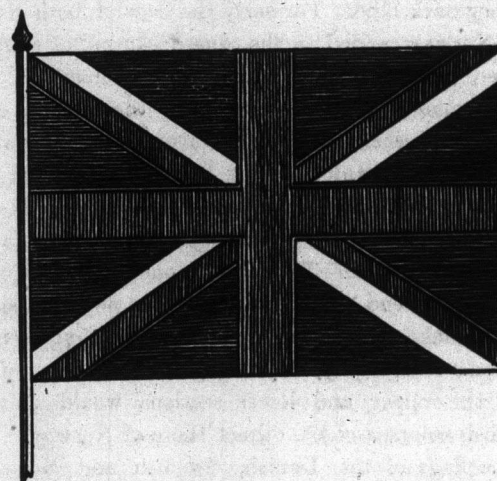
The use of the familiar St. George's Cross, red on white, as the national emblem of England, may be traced back with certainty to the Hundred Years' War, when "St. George for Merrie England" was the favorite battle-cry; and with some probability even back to the Crusades. It is now used as a special flag for the admiral in command of a British fleet. With the Union Jack of Great Britain and Ireland in the staff-head corner, it is the white ensign borne by all our battle-ships in commission. Shorn of its white ground, all but a narrow strip, St. George's Cross is the principal device in the Union Jack, which is more fully described below.

The cross of St. Andrew, an X-shaped cross of white on dark blue ground, the old flag of the kingdom of Scotland, is now used only as a component part of the Union Jack.

St. Andrew's Cross is the principal device in the jack of the Empire of all the Russias; for St. Andrew is the patron saint of Russia, as well as of Scotland. The Russians, however, have reversed the colors, making the cross blue on a white ground; and this simple flag, white, with the blue St. Andrew's Cross, is the ensign of the Russian war-ships. The Russians also venerate St. George; and a certain ship in the Russian navy is entitled to carry, as a special honor, the flag of St. George's Cross; the colors being white on red, the reverse of those in our flag, and the cross being slightly narrower than we make it.

The Russian jack (or flag to be carried at the bow of a war ship) may be described as a red flag with St. George's Cross in white, over which is laid a blue St. Andrew's Cross with white border. The British Union Jack of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, similarly described, was a blue flag with St. Andrew's Cross in white, upon which was laid the red St. George's

Cross with white border. From the first day of the nineteenth century, when the legislative union of Great Britain and Ireland came into effect, the X-shaped red cross of St. Patrick was placed beside the white cross of St. Andrew, occupying half the width, and having, of course, a narrow margin of white on its opposite edge to divide the red from the blue. (According to accepted rules, two "colors" cannot be used in this way without having between them one of the "metals," gold or silver, represented respectively by yellow and white. This rule, however, does not apply to quartering, or to placing a jack in the corner of a flag; but only to devices and the ground color upon which they are displayed.) Look at our Union Jack of the United Kingdom, and distinguish its three crosses; noticing the alternate arrangement of the arms of the crosses of St. Andrew and St. Patrick. A plain red flag with



this jack in the staff-head corner is the red ensign of our merchant ships; the white ensign, described above, the flag of our battle ships in active service, has the red cross throughout its length, as well as the jack in the corner; a plain dark blue flag, with the jack in the staff-head corner, is the blue ensign of the royal naval reserve. Formerly the British fleet was divided into three squadrons, called the red, white and blue, because they bore the red, white and blue ensigns respectively. Hence the refrain of the well-known song, "Three cheers for the red [squadron], white [squadron] and blue [squadron]." The "flag floating proudly before," which was "the boast of the red, white and blue" squadrons, was, of course, the jack, which a battle-ship always carries at the bow. Either a red ensign or a blue ensign becomes a Canadian ensign by having the arms of Canada displayed in its flag; and a like distinction is made for flags of other British colonies, The Union Jack in the canton bringing all under the banner of the cross. All British flags, when properly