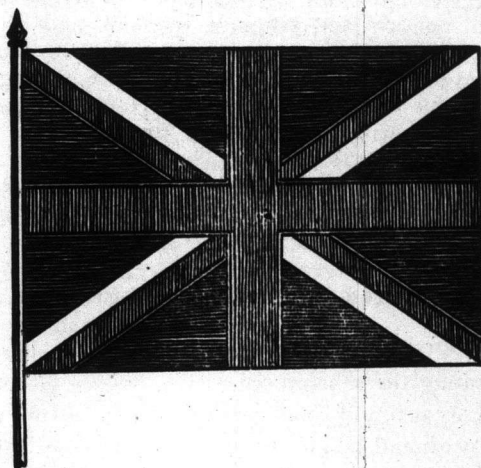


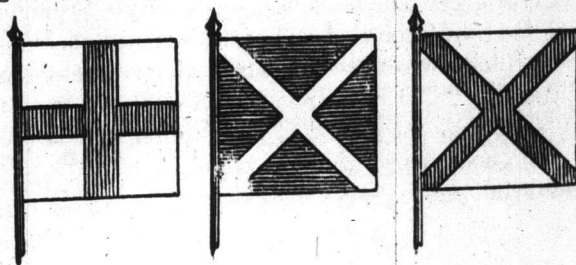
THE FLAG OF THE EMPIRE.

[In this lesson the Union Jack, or Canadian Ensign (which is the British red or blue ensign with the Canadian coat-of-arms in the field) should be spread out before the class. If the school does not possess a flag, small ones may be obtained at a trifling cost, and one, made with colored chalks, may be placed on the blackboard. The prints of flags which are appended, though not colored, may help to teach the lesson.]

Every boy and girl in the land must be quite familiar with the Union Jack, the national flag and the symbol of Britain's might and majesty among the nations. What a strange name for a flag? you will say. So it is; but it is a name with a remarkable history and meaning.



In the first place notice its curious pattern. It is made up of crosses, some red and some white. Let us examine these one by one. The red cross in the middle with an upright and horizontal bar is the cross of St. George. Once upon a time, so the story goes, there lived a brave, fearless soldier, who saved his country from destruction by slaying with his own hand a terrible dragon which was then ravaging it. This brave man was honoured during his lifetime for his deed, and after his death he was regarded as a saint who would continue to watch over the welfare of the people. In this way St. George has been regarded as the patron saint of England. His flag, a red cross on a white ground was always carried in front of the army,



and the battle-cry, "St. George for Merrie England," was often heard in the thick of the fight.

Looking at the Union Jack again another cross will be seen, a white one stretching from corner to corner on a blue background. This is the cross of St. Andrew, one of the twelve apostles, the patron saint of Scotland. Then inside this one is another, the same shape, but red on a white background. This is the cross of St. Patrick, a Christian apostle, the patron saint of Ireland. The union of these three crosses represents the union of England, Scotland and Ireland. Curiously enough in the time of the Crusades, the flag of St. George was familiarly known as the "Jack." Hence the name "Union Jack" means "union with the Jack," because in it the two other crosses are united with this one.

You will read in your history that though Ireland became part of the British dominions as early as the year 1172, and Scotland in 1603, there was no complete union until the parliaments of these three countries were joined into one, which for Scotland and England was in 1707, and for Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. Since then the Union Jack has floated, as the national flag, over all fortresses and on all British ships of war. It has been carried into battle by the soldiers and sailors of the Empire, who are so jealous of its honour that they would, one and all, die at their posts rather than disgrace it by cowardice. It is also carried by merchant vessels to show they are British ships, and that Britain is ready to protect their interests in every part of the world.—Adapted from Macmillan's *Globe Geographical Reader*.

THE UNION JACK.

It's only a small bit of bunting,
It's only an old coloured rag,
Yet thousands have died for its honour
And shed their best blood for the flag.

It's charged with the Cross of St. Andrew,
Which, of old, Scotland's heroes has led;
It carries the Cross of St. Patrick,
For which Ireland's bravest have bled.

Joined with these is our old English ensign,
St. George's red cross on white field,
Round which, from King Richard to Wolseley,
Britons conquer or die, but ne'er yield.

It flutters triumphant o'er ocean,
As free as the winds and the waves;
And bondsmen from shackles unloosened
'Neath its shadows no longer are slaves,