



HISTORY OF THE FLAG.

The word *flag* is derived from the Welsh word "llag," meaning slack, slow, and the Latin word "flaccus," drooping, also to flutter to the wind, as clothes to hang loose, a cloth of light material, white or in colours, to be hung high or carried, designed to make known to spectators some fact or event; a white or coloured piece of cloth on which may be wrought some device usually set upon a staff to wave in the wind, the ensign or colours of a regiment, ship, party, etc.

What do the several crosses mean upon our flag? Why are they placed upon it in that fashion? By what authority were they put there? Why is it that the field of our flag is sometimes red, then white, and again blue? What significance have these crosses and field colours?

First, let us deal with the several crosses, consider briefly the history, and then the order they each represent.

In the early days of chivalry, long before the Norman conquest in England, both the knights and a few of the armies in the field wore a surcoat or "Jacques" (jacket) extending over the armour from the neck to the thighs, bearing upon it the blazon or sign either of their lord or their nationality. Many examples of these are to be seen in the early illuminated manuscripts, or on monuments erected in many cathedrals and sanctuaries.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when the warlike nations of Europe combined to rescue Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the rule of the Mohammedan, the warrior pilgrims from the different countries wore crosses of various shapes and