

THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

ADAPTED FROM THE MELBOURNE "SCHOOL PAPER."

1. A great American orator, Daniel Webster, once referred to the British Empire "as a power to which Rome in the height of her glory was not to be compared — a power which has dotted over the whole surface of the globe with its possessions and military posts — whose morning drum-beat, following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth daily with one continuous and unbroken stream of its martial airs."

2. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or, as it may be called, Britain, is the centre of this Empire. From their island home, once divided into four parts hostile to one another, but now happily united under one crown, went forth Englishmen, Welshmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen to people lands across the ocean. Because they and their descendants speak English, they may be called Englishmen, though some prefer the name Britons.

3. It is a well-known saying, "The sun never sets on the British Empire." It is always day in some land occupied by an English-speaking people. King George rules over about 400 millions of human beings — more than one-fourth of mankind.

4. These occupy or control about one-fifth of the land surface of the globe. The extent of this empire is happily brought before us in the following passage adapted from the Life of Queen Victoria (Nelson and Sons):—

5. "Ere the guns of the Tower of London, at noon on the King's Birthday have ceased to thunder forth the congratulations of the nation, all Canada is awake, and the West Indies are in full activity and five or six millions more, who are proud to call themselves British subjects — together, doubtless, with the eighty millions of English-speaking people in the United States — raise the song, 'God Save the King.'

6. Its echoes have not died out in Victoria, the capital of British Columbia, before the colonists of New Zealand take up the loyal cry.

One hour later, the dawn reaches Australia and Tasmania, and there, thousands of loyal hearts are ready to respond to the prayer, 'God Save the King.'

7. Next, it is taken up by the busy merchants of Hong Kong and Singapore, and is passed on by them to the millions of India who own King George as their Emperor.

'Before the day is an hour old at Bombay, it has dawned on Mauritius.

'Next, it awakens the watchmen of Aden. Almost at the same time it flushes the mountains of Natal and Cape Colony, where there are thousands of Englishmen eager to shout, 'God Save the King!'

8. 'Anon, Malta is reached; and, one hour later, the new dawn tells the sentinels at Windsor that the joyous benediction has travelled with the sunlight from meridian to meridian, round the globe.'

9. The Union Jack — the symbol of the union which binds Englishmen all the world over — should be honored and loved by all the subjects of King George.

10. Mr. Rudyard Kipling has written a noble poem, from which the following extracts are, with his kind permission, taken:—

What is the flag of England? Winds of the world declare!

The North Wind Blew:—

The lean white bear hath seen it in the long, long arctic night,
The musk-ox knows the standard that flouts the northern light;
What is the flag of England? Ye have but my bergs to dare,
Ye have but my drifts to conquer. Go forth, for it is there.

The South Wind sighed:—

Strayed amid lonely islets, mazed amid outer keys.
I waked the palms to laughter — I tossed the scud in the breeze —

Never was isle so little, never was sea so lone,
But over the scud and the palm-tree an English flag was flown.

I have wrenched it free from the halliard to hang for a wisp
on the Horn;

I have chased it north to the Lizard — ribboned and rolled
and torn;

I have spread its folds o'er the dying adrift in a hopeless sea;
I have hurled it swift on the slaver, and seen the slaves set free.

The East Wind roared:—

The desert dust hath dimmed it, the flying wild-ass knows
The sacred white leopard winds it across the taintless snows.
What is the flag of England? Ye have but my sun to dare.
Ye have but my sands to travel. Go forth, for it is there.

The West Wind called:—

The dead, dumb fog hath wrapped it; the frozen dews hath
kissed:

The naked stars have seen it, a fellow star in the mist.

What is the flag of England? Ye have but my breath to
dare,

Ye have but my waves to conquer. Go forth, for it is there.

SUMMER.

The infinite bliss of nature
I feel in every vein,
The life and the light of summer
Blossoms in heart and brain.

—Bayard Taylor.