

# "WE PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO:"



By ELMO SCOTT WATSON



ON JUNE 14 thousands of Americans will, as a part of the annual celebration of Flag day, repeat this sentence: "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." It has been said that "The Pledge to the Flag" has been repeated more than any other quotation from modern literature. For that reason the man who wrote it and the circumstances under which it was written deserve to be remembered.

It is singularly appropriate that this pledge, which has been repeated so many times by so many thousands of school children, should have been written by a member of the editorial staff of the publication which for so many years was Young America's favorite magazine—the Youth's Companion. Francis M. Bellamy was his name, and at the time of his death on August 28, 1931, the memory of his greatest claim to distinction was revived by his widow who gave an interesting account of the origin of the pledge.

A little group of men, who in 1891 believed the flame of patriotism was dying out because of momentous developments in industrial and political circles, sought to "fan the spark into new life," she explained. This effort resulted in President Benjamin Harrison proclaiming October 12, 1892, as the first national holiday in honor of the discovery of America. Delegated to write a proclamation as part of the original ceremony, Bellamy produced a 27-word pledge that stood the test of time.

"Chief among the leaders of the movement," said Mrs. Bellamy, "were President Harrison, James B. Upham, publisher; William T. Harris, federal commissioner of education; and Mr. Bellamy, a member of the editorial staff of the Youth's Companion."

"Mr. Upham conceived the idea of a revival of patriotism at a time when material things occupied the attention of most people. His first plan was to place an American flag over every schoolhouse. As a result, 25,000 flags waved on as many school buildings."

"Then the suggestion was adopted for a national holiday. Committees were formed, public men were interviewed. This handful of men virtually consecrated their lives to the task of obtaining governmental recognition of Columbus day."

"Mr. Bellamy saw congressmen, senators and others in the public eye. He interviewed President Harrison and Grover Cleveland among others."

"Afterwards he aroused interest among congressmen by inducing them to give interviews endorsing



WOODROW WILSON

the project, to newspapers. It wasn't long before senate and house passed a joint resolution giving the President authority to proclaim the holiday, with standard exercises in public schools.

"At last everything was completed except the opening proclamation. The secretary of state asked Mr. Bellamy to do that. Mr. Bellamy nominated Mr. Upham, but the latter refused. After many long weary hours over the draft, my husband produced the pledge that has remained unchanged since then."

"And that's all," she concluded. "All except that Mr. Bellamy's health was imperiled in his work to rediscover America 400 years after Columbus landed."

Although the United States is one of the youngest members in the sis-

terhood of nations of the world, her flag is one of the oldest in the world. Aside from the swallow-tailed, Savoy colors of Denmark, adopted in 1219, and the flag of Switzerland, which dates from the Seventeenth century, history records no national flag with a longer continuous life than ours.

When the Second Continental congress on June 14, 1777, adopted a resolution which read: "Resolved, That the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation," the French tri-color had not yet come into existence. The present British flag dates only from 1801. Germany changed its flag after the fall of the empire in 1918, but even the flag used during the World war was less than 50 years old.

The American flag has three symbolic names—the Stars and Stripes, the Star-Spangled Banner and Old Glory.

The name Stars and Stripes dates, of course, from its very beginning, and is based upon the description of the banner in the flag resolution of June 14, 1777.

The Star-Spangled Banner dates from the War of 1812. Orators may have called our flag by that name before that time, but it remained for Francis Scott Key, a young Maryland lawyer who was detained on a British warship during the bombardment of Fort M'Henry on the night of September 12, 1814, and who saw "by the dawn's early light" of September 13 "that our flag was still there," to express his joy in a poem which was later set to music and which took the country by storm.

The name Old Glory dates from 1831. On August 10 of that year a crowd had gathered at the wharves of Salem, Mass., to witness the departure of the brig, Charles Daggett, which was about to set out on a "round-the-world cruise. Master of the Charles Daggett was Capt. William Driver, noted for his sturdy Americanism and his deep love for his country's flag. So his neighbors had brought him a fine American flag to be hoisted to the masthead of the brig. When the new banner had been run up in its place and rippled in the breeze in all its beauty of red and white and blue, Captain Driver, looking aloft, had a sudden inspiration. "I'll call her Old Glory, boys, Old Glory!" And thus was another symbolical name for our flag born.

Flag day has been the inspiration for a number of memorable tributes to our national banner. In a Flag day address during the World war President Wilson said: "This flag which we honor and under which we serve is the emblem of our unity, our power, our thought and purpose as a nation. . . . It is fitting that we celebrate the day of its birth; and from its birth until now it has witnessed a great history, has floated on high the symbol of great events, of a great plan of life worked out by a great people."

On Flag day in 1914, Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the Interior in President Wilson's cabinet, speaking before employees of his department, delivered a eulogy which has become something of a classic in the literature of the flag. It is the following:

### THE MAKERS OF THE FLAG

This morning, as I passed into the land office, the flag dropped me a most cordial salutation, and from its rippling folds I heard it say: "Good morning, Mr. Flag Maker." "I beg your pardon, Old Glory," I said, "aren't you mistaken? I am not the President of the United States, nor a member of congress, nor even a general in the army. I am only a government clerk."

"I greet you again, Mr. Flag Maker," replied the gay voice; "I know you well. You are the man who worked in the sweeter of yesterday straightening out the tangle of that farmer's homestead in Idaho, or perhaps you found the mistake in that Indian contract in Oklahoma, or helped to clear that patent for the hopeful inventor in New York, or pushed the opening of that new ditch in Colorado, or made that mine in Illinois more safe, or brought relief to the old soldier in Wyoming. No matter; whichever one of these beneficent individuals you may happen to be,

I give you greeting, Mr. Flag Maker."

I was about to pass on, when the flag stopped me with these words: "Yesterday the President spoke a word that made happier the future of 10,000,000 peons in Mexico; but that act looms no larger on the flag than the struggle which the boy in Georgia is making to win the corn club prize this summer."

"Yesterday we made a new law to prevent financial panics, and yesterday, maybe, a school teacher in Ohio taught his first letters to a



FRANCIS SCOTT KEY

boy who will one day write a song that will give cheer to the millions of our race. We are all making the flag."

"But," I said impatiently, "these people were only working!"

"Then came a great shout from the flag:

"The work that we do is the making of the flag."

"I am not the flag; not at all. I am but its shadow."

"I am whatever you make me; nothing more."

"I am your belief in yourself, your dream of what a people may become."

"Sometimes I am strong with pride, when men do an honest work, fitting the rails together truly."

"Sometimes I droop, for then purpose has gone from me, and cynicism I play the coward."

"Sometimes I am loud, garish, and full of that ego that blasts judgment."

"But always I am all that you hope to be and have the courage to try for."

"I am the Constitution and the courts, statutes and the statute-makers, soldier and dragoon, drayman and street sweep, cook, counselor and clerk."

"I am the battle of yesterday and the mistake of tomorrow."

"I am the mystery of the men who do without knowing why."

"I am the clutch of an idea and the reasoned purpose of resolution."

"I am no more than what you believe me to be and I am all that you believe that I can be."

"I am what you make me; nothing more."

"I swing before your eyes as a bright gleam of color, a symbol of yourself, the pictured suggestion of that big thing which makes this nation. My stars and my stripes are your dream and your labors. They are bright with cheer, brilliant with courage, firm with faith, because you have made them so out of your hearts; for you are the makers of the flag, and it is well that you glory in the making."

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tor" is Benjamin Althelmer of New York. Under the title of "Flag-Day Man," the New Yorker magazine in its issue of June 14, 1930, told his story as follows:

If the lady on your left tires of your more ponderous dinner topics, you might tell her about Benjamin Althelmer. "Benjamin Althelmer," you might say, "is responsible for Flag day; did you know that?" To prove that you are not just trying to be funny, you can give her the facts about Mr. Althelmer, and how he thought up Flag day. Here they are: He is a real person, alive, and well, and lives right in old New York. Although eighty, he can still get about spryly. No one in the world gets a greater thrill out of walking up Fifth avenue on June 14 than he does. After all, he put those flags out there—yours and mine and Lord & Taylor's and everybody else's.

Mr. Althelmer thought of setting aside a special day for the Spangled Banner, back in 1910. He was on a visit to San Antonio, and he watched with sparkling eyes the flag-retreat ceremony at Fort Sam Houston one afternoon. It impressed him mightily. He was about sixty then, and a great patriot in a quiet way, a lover of the flag of the Betsy Ross tradition, of the United States of America generally (oddly enough, he was born in Germany).

He came to America as a young man, plunged into banking and brokerage out in St. Louis and, in no time, made millions of dollars. His gratitude for the quick success that he, a foreign-born Jew, had in a strange country, took the form of philanthropy and patriotism. He gave to hospitals, founded libraries, aided government projects, financed charities, led off campaigns for the relief of victims of fire, flood, war, and unemployment. Always in his mind, however, there lurked a desire to do something for America in a big way. The incident at San Antonio was his inspiration. A great reader of our history, he knew (or if he didn't, he looked it up) that June 14 was the day on which congress accepted Betsy Ross' flag. Then, with the same spirit and gusto that had put over charitable campaigns, he started his drive to interest the nation in its flag. He began on St. Louis. He promised to give a fine flag to any institution which would formally observe Flag day on the fourteenth. The Second Presbyterian church of St. Louis was the first to respond—in 1911. Other churches, synagogues, and schools fell in

line. Mr. Althelmer soon had to go into the flag-purchasing and presenting business on a big scale, with secretaries and others helping him to meet the demand. Since he was retired from banking, he could give all of his time to it. In 1912 St. Louis, as a municipality, celebrated Flag day. Flags were everywhere. All traffic stopped for a full minute at a given time. Mr. Althelmer was happy. He was happier yet when, in 1917, he got to President Wilson in person, and Flag day was made a national occasion. In 1927, the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the flag, the United States Flag association invited Mr. Althelmer, along with Lindbergh, to attend its celebration in Washington. He couldn't go, because of illness, but the association sent him a cross of honor and a citation, signed by Coolidge, "for having planted the true appreciation of the flag in the hearts of the American people."



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## Quaint Furnishings for Your Summer Cottage

A certain crudity of decoration is needed in summer cottages which have no plaster. There are also some substantial summer houses in which simplicity is courted even to the verge of crudity. Those who enjoy summering in cottages of this sort should keep in mind the ingenious devices they have seen, for they may prove helpful. The ideas presented today are fascinating in their development and have proved practical.

To suit the decoration to the dwelling, and instill artistic touches through simplicity requires an appreciation of beauty in nature and a power to convert natural elements into ornamental accessories and furnishings. In old settler days it was by virtue of necessity that beauty was wrested from things which were at hand. Today no such necessity stalks, so it is the pleasure of exercising one's own ingenuity, or the business of the trained decorator, to devise unusual ways and means to produce these effects.

The quick eye of one trained camper discovered a good use for small bent branches. He converted them into door handles in lieu of knobs. He selected small bent branches which formed acute or right angles. The ends of each naturally bent branch he sawed so that they would fit against the door, and then he screwed the wood down to it. Some of these handles were larger than others, none of them were duplicates in shape nor had the precise angle of others. It was partly this variety which made them intriguing. All were of sufficiently smooth bark to remain in their natural state and be congenial to the hand.

Before leaving the subject of branches in decoration, let me tell you of a very old little bedside stand which I delight in. A small tree trunk forms the standard and the legs consist of four branches which all separate from this trunk at the same place. I often think of the joy with which the maker must have espied this tree with its four forked branches, or with what pleasure

he watched the sapling grow until it was just the right size to be used for the tree trunk. This table was made long years ago, by Plymouth settler folk.

A modern ingenious use of white birch saplings is found in one country farm house decorated in old-time simplicity. Each window in the living and also the dining room has one straight white birch sapling for a curtain rod. The curtain rings are small cross sections of birch trees with the centers hollowed out and smoothed. The wood at the sides between the hole and the birch bark outside is painted to suit the color scheme of the room. The rings do not slide easily, to be sure, but then the quaint textile hangings are for ornament, not use, as is generally the case.

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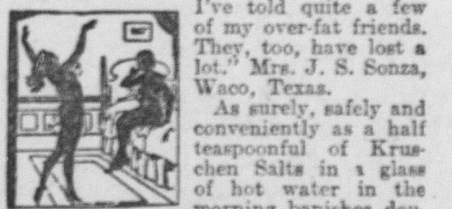
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