

Stars and Stripes Forever



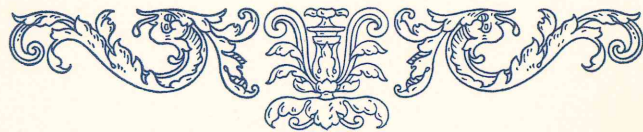
Stars and Stripes Forever



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NEIGHBORS, Joshua Elkins, the editor of the Goose Creek Bugle, gimme some paper and a pencil, and asked me to come down here on the bank o' Goose Creek and write off a piece on "The Stars and Stripes Forever." The folks here in the settlement want me to make a talk on the 4th o' July, so I says to myself that I'd jest kill two birds with one stone and make one writin' do fer both.

The only trouble about the whole thing is the history book that the editor gimme to read so as I could draw off what ruint the nations that used to rule the world. You see, Joshua's idear is, that if we can find out what undone other nations, why it mought help us to steer clear of all sich things fer the United States.

It's awful quiet down here on the creek; and, as fur as I'm concerned, I'd a whole lot ruther set here and fish than to try to write something about keeping the Stars and Stripes a-floatin' over the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave. Yet and still, if we don't keep the

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Stars and Stripes a-floatin', why they mought not be no fishin' ner nuthin' else.

Several of the neighbors have asked me to bring out something special that they are interested in, that is, when I make my patriotic talk on the 4th o' July. Sister Lige Gupton is awful anxious that something is said on wimmin's rights. Well, all I've got to say on that is I ain't a-goin' to git mixed up in sich things! Wimmin are lookin' after their rights; they even did in Eden, and the last woman on earth will do likewise! Several of the leadin' farmin' neighbors wanted to help me write my talk, and put in it something agin the factories and all work that ain't farmin'. I says to 'em, one and all, "Brothers and sisters, I was asked to write the speech—you all want asked! And I'm a-goin' straight down to the Creek bank and write it out with the Lord's help, without fear er favor." Yes, sir, I'm set and determed to think o' nothin' but the flag. And that's a mighty precious thing to every liberty-lovin', God-fearin' citizen of these United States.

Well, now, let's see! I ort to say somethin' stirrin' about the flag. I don't know whether I can read it er not, after I've wrote it down.

"There's the flag, long may it wave!" That's a good start. I better be shore to git Grandpa Whortle to bring

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his flag and put it up on a pole so as I can pint to it when I says, "There's the flag."

Now, what else? Oh, yes, "There's the flag, long may it wave, o'er the land of the free, and the home of the brave." So good so fer! Now, to bring out what's to keep it from waving. Let's see in this book what stopped the other flags from wavin', and then I can talk on keepin' off all sich things from this glorious land that we love so well.

Joshua Elkins has marked here in this book the things that killed off the Roman government. Gracious me! That sure was a long ways back. Rome went to pieces in 476! Look here what the book says, "The Roman state, it was universally believed, was to endure forever." Now, you see! Yit, it went down in 476. There's a good pint: no nation lives fer ever simply because the folks in it think it will go on always! So, we'd better look over what disappointed the people back there in the past days, and wrecked their government.

Here's the list of the things that undone Rome. Great day in the morning! Look at that map in this histery book! That's how big the country was that the Umpire was the head man over! That mought-a been one thing that caused the government to go to pieces, and the whole thing to fall into ruins. They stretched their territory so fur they couldn't handle it. Now, you take a farmer

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that tries to take in more ground than he can cultivate, what happens? Why, the whole thing grows up in weeds, that's what. Let's all hope the Stars and Stripes will allers wave, but not try to wave over more'n we got now. They's 48 eggs in the eagle's nest now; and our national eagle will be a wise bird not to try to spread herself too fur! A-settin' on these eggs (states, is what I really mean), she'll hatch peace at home and with the world, and prosperity to one an' all.

Secondly, it says here in the book—and, you know, history that's wrote long enough after the things it talked about really happened, why, it's fair in what it says. When folks that are too close to things try to write the history of 'em, they allers color it too much with their own likes and dislikes. Rome's fur enough off fer them that writes on it to tell the on-varnished truth. That's why it's good to go back as fur as Rome (not Rome in Georgia where Uncle Tid Walters' grandparents come from, but the real, genuine Rome that's away off yonder in—never mind whar it's at, it's a fur piece).

The book says here, "It required a great deal of money to support the luxurious palaces of the Emperors at Rome and Constantinople, with their innumerable officials and servants, and to supply bread and circuses for the populates of the towns." Forever more! No wonder Rome

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fell! They had no business trying to make bread and circuses free! Why, they ort to hoped the pore people to earn their bread, and pay their own way into the circuses. Me and Sarah can't go to a circus in Punkin Center even at four bits fer the tickets!

Thirdly, here's something on how they picked out who was goin' to be the Umpire. It says, "No candidate could be Emperor unless he had the vote of the army, and the army always had several rival leaders who fought among themselves for the coveted place of Emperor of the vast dominion." Oh, they got to fightin' amongst theyselves! That was enough to take their flag down. Yes, inside fightin' allers hurts worse than outside war!

Fourthly, let's see what else is here in the book on history: "The sad plight of the poorer laboring classes was largely due to the terrible institution of slavery. When the Romans conquered a new region they were in the habit, in accordance with the customs of war, of reducing a considerable part of the inhabitants to slavery. (Shame on 'em!) All labor fell into the hands of slaves, and the aristocracy spurned all forms of labor." There you are! Whenever a nation has a lot o' folks that won't work, and depends on the workers fer something to eat, there's allers trouble. The Lord said it once and fer all: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." There's one thing that mought hurt the flag! Folks a-tryin' to

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take off the judgement put on human people by the Lord—that is, that all have to work. The Lord'll take care of that rule, but not until we come into them new times described in the Bible as sich that "the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea." And, we all know good and well no sich times as them has come yit! And, another thing, it won't do no good to take the money and property away from them that has, and divide it up among them that ain't go nothin'. No siree! Let everybody have a chance to work and enjoy the fruit of their own labor! That's my doctern!

Fifthly, it says here: "The supply of slaves was cut off after the Romans ceased to conquer new territory. In order to increase the population, great numbers of the neighboring German tribes were encouraged to settle within the Empire. These Germans were enlisted in the Roman Legions to help repulse the attack of the invading Barbarians. The custom increased until whole armies were German, entire tribes being enlisted under their own chief." You see! First, the Roman people turned over their farmin' and all work to slaves, then they turned over their armies to folks that come from other countries, while they wallowed in wealth and did things that no nice folks ort to do. That's two of the main things that got Rome down! Here's a good lesson fer

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all of us who want to see that flag float ferever jist like it looks today! When people git others to do the work, and the fightin' to protect their homes and native land, why, there ain't much left to fight fer!

Sixthly, you see them fellers that come from furrin' places didn't think like them old-fashioned Romans thought. Why, they would git out and die fer their native land. Then, too, mighty nigh every tribe that come in brought its idears about religion until it was all one grand mess. In fact, it got so bad that there wasn't much religion atall! The grand books that smart fellers had wrote, why, they was no longer read. Everybody was studyin' about makin' more money so as they could show off and maybe be a umpire theyselves. The love of the land, home, and country jest died a nacheral death. Then, Rome sorta wobbled awhile, and then jest fell! And great was the fall! The book here says it shuck up everything, so that the panic lasted fer over 100 years over all the known world.

I think I orta tech on the old folks that done so much to make this nation of ours what it is today. They went through hardships, swum rivers, fought off Indians, built their homes outen the trees they cleared off the fields, but they brought their Bibles with 'em acrost the ocean, and built their homes on faith in God! That's what they done!

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In our veins there flows this blood that's come down from these rugged pioneers. You women are the daughters of the heroines of the plains! You men are the sons of the makers of a great Republic! 'Course you all have courage, determination, and reverence fer God—it's in your pedigree! Shorely, American manhood and womanhood will never sell sich a God-given birthright fer a mess a pottage!

It ain't the number of factories we have that'll guarantee our future greatness! Neither is it the silver and gold folks will pile up in the banks that will make us rich! It ain't the men hired to fight that makes up our greatest defence! I'll tell you what defence we need; not that we build outen concrete and steel, but the faith in God we built in our hearts! Our riches is our national inheritance of greatness from the folks who laid the foundation stones of this Republic! The guarantee of our future is the faithfulness to our God-imposed trust today!

And who's a-goin' to do all these things? There's the pint! Well, as fur as I can see, there ain't but three classes in any nation, divide 'em all up as you may. There's the top crowd, them that's been successful, and, in most cases, them that's got the wealth. Then, there's the crowd that's at the bottom, like them slaves was in Rome. They ain't enough of the rich to do all that's needed to be done, if they was a minded to do it, and,

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let me say right here, there's a whole lot of rich folks who are willin' to do mighty nigh anything to pass on to future generations the blessings that we enjoy this 4th o' July. Them that's at the bottom ain't got much to do with, ner no time to do it in. They're like a rabbit that's only a jump er two ahead o' a passle o' hounds. Now, who's left to do the work o' keepin' that flag a-floatin', and to inshore the goin' on of the nation even to grander things? Why, it's the middle class, that's who!

Whenever America loses its middle class by either seein' 'em rise to the place of the powerful and rich, er watches 'em crushed down to the level of the pore and wretched, that's when our flag will be shore 'nuff threatened, and that's when the eagle, that so proudly plumes its feathers today, will droop its wings as them proud eagles done in Rome!

"Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
For a bold peasantry, the country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied."

I think I'll quit with that, take a drink of the pink lemonade that Finis Purtle says he'll have there on the speaker's table, and set down. 'Course what I've wrote out here ain't much, but they's one thing shore about it—it's as true as the needle to the pole!

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The sun's a-goin' down now, and I guess I'll be gittin' on towards the parsonage, and feed the chickens, milk the cow, and give Dan his oats. Then, I'll go in the house and put my feet under the parsonage table where Sarah will set and pour the coffee.

Neighbors, comin' down from eagles and flags to where we all live at, lemme say, in concluding this piece, that whatever would harm these sweet little homes would do more towards pullin' down the flag than any armies that will ever try to land on our shores!

Here's something else I jest thought of:

May the sun of America's greatness never set!

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