**Episodes From American History**

**The Secret Teachings of All Ages - Manly P. Hall 1928**

**The designing of the American flag--The Declaration of Independence.**

Many times the question has been asked, Was Francis Bacon's vision of the "New Atlantis" a prophetic dream of the great civilization which was so soon to rise upon the soil of the New World? It cannot be doubted that the secret societies of Europe conspired to establish upon the American continent "a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal." Two incidents in the early history of the United States evidence the influence of that *silent body* which has so long guided the destinies of peoples and religions. By them nations are created as vehicles for the promulgation of ideals, and while nations are true to these ideals they survive; when they vary from them they vanish like the Atlantis of old which had ceased to "know the gods."

In his admirable little treatise, *Our Flag*, Robert Allen Campbell revives the details of an obscure, but most important, episode of American history--the designing of the Colonial flag of 1775. The account involves a mysterious man concerning whom no information is available other than that he was on familiar terms with both General George Washington and Dr. Benjamin Franklin. The following description of him is taken from Campbell's treatise:

"Little seems to have been known concerning this old gentleman; and in the materials from which this account is compiled his name is not even once mentioned, for he is uniformly spoken of or referred to as 'the Professor.' He was evidently far beyond his threescore and ten years; and he often referred to historical events of more than a century previous just as if he had been a living witness of their occurrence; still he was erect, vigorous and active--hale, hearty, and clear-minded--as strong and energetic every way as in the prime of his life He was tall, of fine figure, perfectly easy, and very dignified in his manners; being at once courteous, gracious and commanding. He was, for those times and considering the customs of the Colonists, very peculiar in his method of living; for he ate no flesh, fowl or fish; he never used for food any 'green thing,' any roots or anything unripe; he drank no liquor, wine or ale; but confined his diet to cereals and their products, fruits that were ripened on the stem in the sun, nuts, mild tea and the sweets of honey, sugar or molasses.

"He was well educated, highly cultivated, of extensive as well as varied information, and very studious. He spent considerable of his time in the patient and persistent conning of a number of very rare old books and ancient manuscripts which he seemed to be deciphering, translating or rewriting. These books and manuscripts, together with his own writings, he never showed to anyone; and he did not even mention them in his conversations with the family, except in the most casual way; and he always locked them up carefully in a large, old-fashioned, cubically shaped, iron-bound, heavy, oaken chest, whenever he left his room, even for his meals. He took long and frequent walks alone, sat on the brows of the neighboring hills, or mused in the midst of the green and flower-gemmed meadows. He was fairly liberal--but in no way lavish--in spending his money, with which he was well supplied. He was a quiet, though a very genial and very interesting, member of the family; and be was seemingly at home upon any and every topic coming up in conversation. He was, in short, one whom everyone would notice and respect, whom few would feel well acquainted with, and whom no one would presume to question concerning himself--as to whence he came, why he tarried, or whither he journeyed. "

By something more than a mere coincidence the committee appointed by the Colonial Congress to design a flag accepted an invitation to be guests, while in Cambridge, of the same family with which the Professor was staying. It was here that General Washington joined them for the purpose of deciding upon a fitting emblem. By the signs which passed between them it was evident that both General Washington and Doctor Franklin recognized the Professor, and by unanimous approval he was invited to become an active member of the committee. During the proceedings which followed, the Professor was treated with the most profound respect and all of his suggestions immediately acted upon. He submitted a pattern which he considered symbolically appropriate for the new flag, and this was unhesitatingly accepted by the other six members of the committee, who voted that the arrangement suggested by the Professor be forthwith adopted. After the episode of the flag the Professor quietly vanished, and nothing further is known concerning him.

Did General Washington and Doctor Franklin recognize the Professor as an emissary of the Mystery school which has so long controlled the political destinies of this planet? Benjamin Franklin was a philosopher and a Freemason--possibly a Rosicrucian initiate. He and the Marquis de Lafayette--also a man of mystery--constitute two of the most important links in the chain of circumstance that culminated in the establishment of the original thirteen American Colonies as a free and independent nation. Doctor Franklin's philosophic attainments are well attested in *Poor Richard's Almanac*, published by him for many years under the name of Richard Saunders. His interest in the cause of Freemasonry is also shown by his republication of Anderson's *Constitutions of Freemasonry*, a rare and much disputed work on the subject.

It was during the evening of July 4, 1776, that the second of these mysterious episodes occurred. In the old State House in Philadelphia a group of men were gathered for the momentous task of severing the last tie between the old country and the new. It was a grave moment and not a few of those present feared that their lives would be the forfeit for their audacity. In the midst of the debate a fierce voice rang out. The debaters stopped and turned to look upon the stranger. Who was this man who had suddenly appeared in their midst and transfixed them with his oratory? They had never seen him before, none knew when he had entered, but his tall form and pale face filled them with awe. His voice ringing with a holy zeal, the stranger stirred them to their very souls. His closing words rang through the building: "*God has given America to be free*!" As the stranger sank into a chair exhausted, a wild enthusiasm burst forth. Name after name was placed upon the parchment: the Declaration of Independence was signed. But where was the man who had precipitated the accomplishment of this immortal task--who had lifted for a moment the veil from the eyes of the assemblage and revealed to them a part at least of the great purpose for which the new nation was conceived? He had disappeared, nor was he ever seen again or his identity established. This episode parallels others of a similar kind recorded by ancient historians attendant upon the founding of every new nation. Are they coincidences, or do they demonstrate that the divine wisdom of the ancient Mysteries still is present in the world, serving mankind as it did of old?

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