

"Yesterday we made a new law to prevent financial panics, and yesterday, maybe, a school teacher in Ohio taught his first letters to a boy who will one day write a song that will give cheer to the millions of our race. We are 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 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.

"I live a changing life, a life of moods and passions, of heart breaks and tired muscles.

"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 cynically 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 courage to try for.

"I am song and fear, struggle and panic, and ennobling hope.

"I am the day's work of the weakest man, and the largest dream of the most daring.

"I am the Constitution and the courts, statutes and the statute makers, soldiers and dreadnaught, 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.