

one, though but a little boy when I heard it. I was eleven years old when Mrs. Ross died in our house, and well remember her telling the story. * * * *

"Washington was a frequent visitor at my grandmother's house before receiving his command of the army. She embroidered his shirt-ruffles, and did many other things for him. He knew her skill with the needle. Colonel [George] Ross, with another [member of the committee], who is thought to be Robert Morris, and General Washington called upon Mrs. Ross, and told her they were a committee of congress and wanted her to make the flag from the drawing, a rough one, which, upon her suggestions, was redrawn by General Washington in pencil in her back-parlor. This was prior to the Declaration of Independence, and I fix the date to be during Washington's visit to congress from New York, in June, 1776, where he came to confer upon the affairs of the army, the flag being no doubt one of these affairs."

"Mr. Canby, in later letters, contends that the stars and stripes were in common if not general use soon after the Declaration of Independence, and nearly a year before the resolution of congress proclaiming them the flag of the United States of America."¹

Swayed as one might be into a belief that Mr. Canby's allegations are true regarding his grandmother's fabrication of a United States flag of thirteen alternate red and white stripes, with a blue field, on which were displayed thirteen white stars, before the American congress had taken any action to establish the style of one, and that shortly after the Declaration of Independence banners of its kind were borne by continental and militia regiments and were flying on ships of the American navy, one must not forget that his asseverations are not substantiated by any documentary proof and as yet have no historical value.

A pernicious misstatement has recently been made in this form: "The construction of the first 'Stars and Stripes' took place under the personal direction of George Washington, aided by Robert Morris and Colonel Ross, a committee of congress 'authorized to design a suitable flag for the nation.' Some time between the twenty-third of May and the seventh of June, 1777, the design was taken to a little house * * * * then the home of a noted needlewoman, Mrs. Betsy Ross. * * * * Mrs. Ross suggested that a five-pointed star would be more pleasing to the eye than the six-pointed one in the original design; and her suggestion was carried out. The following day the flag was ready, and [on] June 14th, 1777, congress adopted it. * * * * A little later congress issued an order on the treasury to pay '£14 12s. 2d. to Betsy Ross for the making of the flags for the fleet in the Delaware.'"

A perversion of the subject-matter of certain records of the Navy-Board

¹ Our flag. Origin and progress of the flag of the United States of America. By George Henry Preble, U. S. N. 1872, pp. 192, 193, 194.