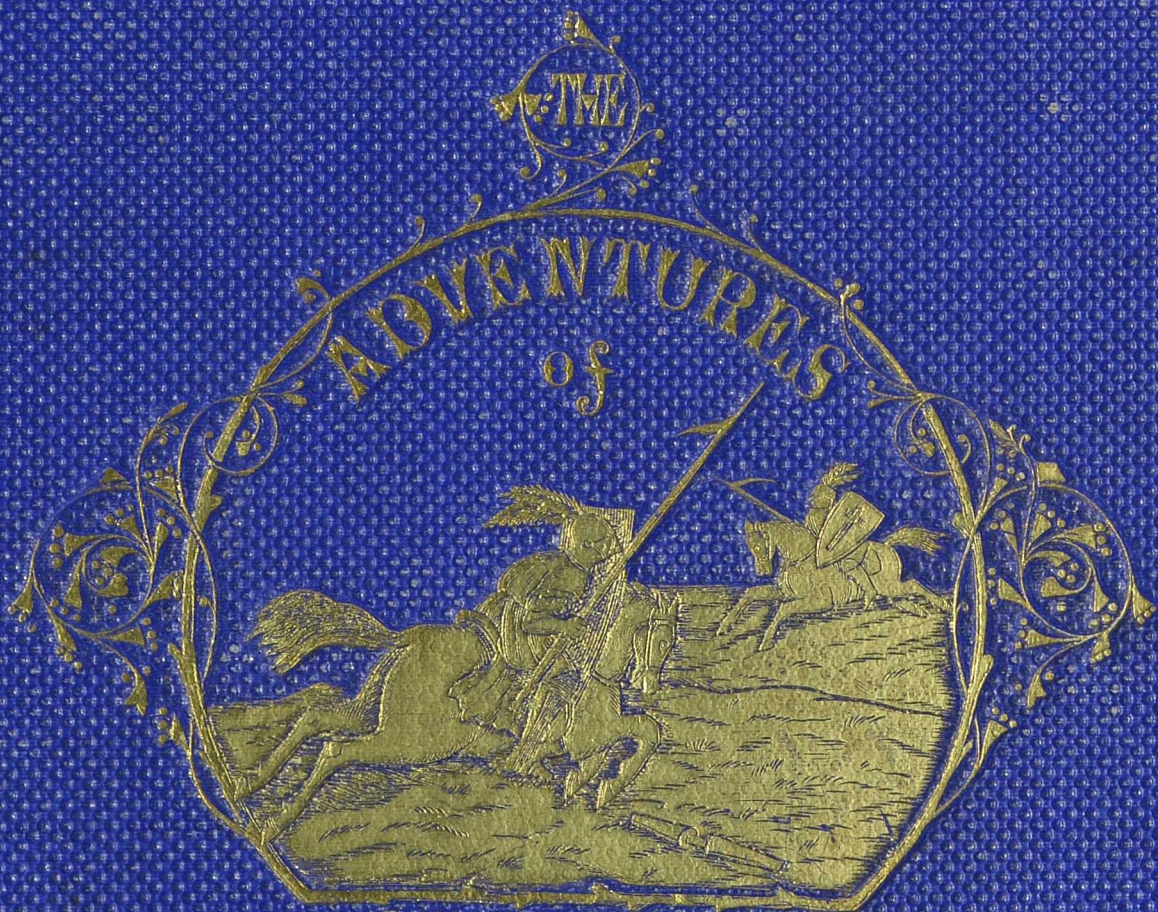




ST. GEORGE.





THE
ADVENTURES OF ST. GEORGE

AFTER

His Famous Encounter

WITH

THE DRAGON.

BY

W. F. PEACOCK.



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PREFACE.

IN Japan the priests of Bhudda are designated *bonzes*. These priests prevent Christian missionaries from making converts, by assuring the common folk that their eyes will be used by the heretics as *telescope glasses*!—a fiction which the people don't seem to see through. Now, I want you to look, with *my* eyes, at this little narrative; perceiving its honest purpose, to innocently amuse, and afford a few hours' pleasure. I pray you avoid a severe judgment, and let me have the benefit of any doubts you may hold; in which case, I may hereafter give to posterity the adventures of Boldheart the Warrior, and perhaps succeed better than in the present Chronicle.

W. F. P.

DEDICATED

TO

J. J. GREENHALGH,

THE VALUED FRIEND

WHO HAS, WITH ME, VISITED MANY A BOLD AND LOVELY SCENE,

THE NATURAL FEATURES OF WHICH I HAVE

HEREIN DESCRIBED.

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ST. GEORGE: HIS FURTHER ADVENTURES.

CHAPTER I.

St. George's Escape from the Tower—Song of the Knights—St. George Departs—The Lonely Wood at Sunset—The Mystic Shrine—St. George's Prayer—The Dream—The Vision—The Guiding Bird—The Enchanted Castle—His Entrance—The Terrible Inscription of Malgreda the Sorcerer—The Unknown Knight who has attached himself to Malgreda—His promised Reward—St. George's Oath—Exit from the Tower.

IT is not generally known that, ere pursuing the dragon to its haunt in the ruined tower, St. George had precipitately, but securely, fastened the reins of his horse to an iron ring which stood out from the walls beneath. His terrific combat with the monster has become a household word, and I need not enter into the details thereof. Wounded to the death, the expiring foe clung, gasping, to the dilapidated rampart, where, with many a hideous cry—its wings outspread, and quivering with convulsive throes—it presently breathed its last. Not to be wearied by re-traversing the sinuous and difficult passages through which he had so valiantly followed his conquered enemy, St. George determined on a novel mode of action. He assured himself of the dragon's death; then, mounting the ramparts, prepared to let himself fall upon the external sward, from the great horns of the monster. While balancing his body for that purpose, a great and cheering shout met his ear, and looking beneath, he beheld the knights who had bid him God speed in bygone times, ere his encounter with the dreadful beast which he had vowed to slay. Again and again, as they perceived the bleeding evidence of his valour, their acclamations arose: then, dismounting from their steeds, the warriors formed into a compact circle, and, elevating a shield on their united lances, received St. George in safety, until he sprang therefrom and stood unharmed

at their side. It is unnecessary to dwell on what was said in welcome and in admiration; nor need I recount the experiences, dangers, and deeds of daring, which were exchanged in story, as they made merry in the tent of Conrad the Eagle-Crested, their leader—the guest and hero, St. George, meanwhile reclining in their midst. But before taking leave of those gallant knights I may preserve for future generations the song which Eustace de Tracy improvised for the occasion, and accompanied on the harp of his gentle page, young Landois.

GUILBERT.

A knight from a distant land there came,
 Where the dewdrop kisses the opening bell;
 And he wandered in search of Beauty and Fame,
 With inward yearnings which nought could quell.
 Gallant and noble this knight, I trow;
 Gaze on his form and manly brow!
 Ready to fight
 For God and the Right
 With his falchion bright at saddle-bow!

Glittered his armour, flashed his lance,
 And the plume in his casque waved gracefully;
 Behold how the rays of the sun enhance
 His charger's trappings and panoply!
 This gallant knight
 And steed bedight,
 Bearing themselves so firm and free!

Thus and thus he journeyed on,
 And gracefully waved his eagle plume,
 Till he reached the walls of Ascalon,
 Which darkly mirrored night's gathering gloom.
 A maiden there,
 In tearful prayer,
 Knelt, like an angel within a tomb!

Shadowed around, the maiden kneels,
 And her voice is all the knight can hear;
 He tightens his rein; his start reveals
 A secret thrill, and a secret fear!
 "'Tis she! 'tis she!—
 Yet it may not be!"
 But she prays for Guilbert her cavalier!

Then he cried, "Clarisse, oh sigh no more !
Thy cavalier comes to thy release ;
He hath sought thee long, and his search was sore !
But thy captivity soon shall cease !
Far and wide
I have sought my bride,
My long-lost ladye—my own Clarisse !"

Who hath not heard the glowing rede ?
How Guilbert laughed at Ascalon's might ?
How he bore the maid on his gallant steed,
And humbled the Saracens in the fight ?
For Valour's seat
Is at Love's feet,
And God and Heaven protect the right !

As the echo of De Tracy's voice faded away and gave place to the plaudits of his brethren, St. George arose and announced his desire to depart. "Not that," said he, "I desire to quit such goodly company ; but a sense of duty impels, and I have a mental prophecy of coming events."

So, with many a friendly greeting, our champion rode forth on his beloved horse. Presently he arrived at the desert's verge, and entered a lonely wood. The sunset streamed around him, and seemed to glorify the silence of the forest. Thus he proceeded, when at last he came upon a shrine about which many a parasite flowret lingered, and many a green leaf throve. A curiously fashioned tablet, fixed on the summit, arrested his attention ; and, in quaint characters, this inscription appeared :—"To the future unknown knight who shall address his lance in defence of beauty, chivalry, and love." Dismounting, St. George prayed that he might be the hero of that mystic tablet, and then, overpowered by sleep, he secured his steed, and reclined on the verdant carpet of nature. Long were his slumbers, but a dream sundered them. It seemed to him that he was beneath the walls of a fortified city. A maiden, young and beautiful as the May morn, besought his aid. Before her stood a colossal monster, terrific indeed, who, with upraised axe, endangered her life. Thrice he lifted his weapon, but at each time an arm arrested his ; but which, though it averted the blow, was powerless to annihilate the giver. Then, at the next stroke, a dagger was (by a gauntleted palm) sheathed in the destroyer's heart ; and as he gasped his hideous life away, a noble knight stepped forth, who claimed the ladye as his guerdon. With that, St. George awoke ; and, saddling his trusty steed, he said,

"Fate hath reserved for me some special act of heroism, and I go to prove the truth thereof!"

So St. George mounted. At that moment a beautiful bird flew from the rustling cedars, and, with chirp and little cries, wooed him to follow. He did so, he knew not wherefore; and the gentle winged herald sped before his plume until it alighted on the mossy stones of a ruined pile which stood forth threateningly in the dying twilight. The brave St. George, as holy as brave, looked with religious enthusiasm on the tower before him; he felt that his dream was in process of being interpreted, and his instincts told him of a connection between it and the stones in front. "God and the Right!" he cried, then spurred his steed up the acclivity. And now he was beneath the tower walls, which, though shaken by accident and mutilated by time, still barred his progress. A massive gate appeared to check his advance, but the memory of a cry he had heard in his dream, when the threatening arm descended, came to him; and impulsively he uttered, "The truth must conquer! Give way, O destroyer of innocence!" With that, the gate swung inwards, and he rode forward, astonished at the instant efficacy of his conjuration. For a time nought save weeds, and creeping plants, and dismantled gateways, met his view. Finally, he emerged into a temple, the entrance to which was guarded by brazen bulls and personations in iron of fiends, whose uncouth shapes excited his disgust. A giant stood before them, breathing flame from his extended lips, and brandishing a sword around which many hissing serpents twined. Couching his lance, St. George shouted his adjuration; but ere his armed heel smote the willing steed that bore him, the figures passed into air, and a noise, as of a thousand gongs, grew loud and louder in his ear. There was no guardian of the temple now. Entering, he beheld a table of ebony, on which lay a casket of pearl. It was with St. George the work of a moment to seize the beaming receptacle, and with anxious fingers he strove to open it, the chamber meanwhile glowing with the light which had from the beginning streamed from a transparent vase in its centre. In vain his efforts, until the words of his dream recurring, he repeated them: "The truth must conquer! Give way, O destroyer of innocence!"

Immediately the secret springs unclasped, and he perceived that the casket held a parchment sealed with the image of the dragon transfixed by a spear. Unfolding the parchment, and assisted by the mysterious radiance which lit the chamber, he read what called a burning flush to his cheek and caused his brow to knit in anger; and the writing was this:—

"Malgre da the Sorcerer to all greeting! Be it known that to the knight

who shall slay the greatest foe to sorcery and the spirits of evil shall be given Malgreda's lovely child, and that to him who shall destroy Malgreda's greatest friend shall be bequeathed Malgreda's bitterest hate. The friend is found, but the foe is not. Tremble who readest, for if thou armest thyself against Malgreda and the approved champion of his cause, ICALON, nought can save thee but the possession of that before which even sorceries fail, and faith and religion bow !"

With mailed fist upraised and menacing, St. George vowed a solemn vow to relieve the endangered damsel ; then, confiding the parchment to his breast, he left the temple of the sorcerer by the way he had gained it, the moonlight (which had arisen) falling in tender floods around him.

CHAPTER II.

The Enchanted Cave—The Siren—The Temptation—"Is it, or is it not?"—St. George's Potent Talisman to discover Good and Evil Influences—His Rejection of the Temptress—The Demon of the Desert—St. George's Encounter—Senseless—The Recluse—The Erector of the Memorial—St. George's Progress—His Encounter with the Robbers—Victory—The Defile and Pass—The City Damsel at the Spring—Her Tears—Her Story—Watched from the Walls—The Dead Knight—Icalon the Seven-Fingered—The Cry—"My Father"—Discovery of the Dead Knight—Malgreda's Onset—St. George's Prowess.

PURSUING his course, and aided by the gentle light, St. George perceived a ridge of rocks. He gained its summit, then descending, with difficulty reached a broad plain. Letting the reins repose on his horse's neck, he rode along, meditating on previous events. Who was Malgreda, and who Icalon? and was he the knight destined to preserve Malgreda's child from Icalon's ambitious grasp? In St. George would the sorcerer find his greatest foe, and Innocence her dearest friend? "To be, or not to be?"—only Shakspeare, you know, was not alive or dead at the period in question; St. George knowing as little of Shakspeare as Shakspeare then knew of Hamlet, or Hamlet of St. George.

The argent radiance silvered the champion's armour, and the point of his lance seemed to be a star. By-and-by he had crossed the plain, and entered a wood which enclosed a babbling stream. Threading the trees, and now keeping a tight rein on his charger, St. George made his way to the water-course, and on its brink halted to observe. The moonbeams toyed with the little waves, and the young current leaped on as though caressed by its nocturnal guardian into playfulness. But where there is light exists darkness; and the opposite side of the stream was overcast by rocks, which stood like adverse and threatening spirits of the place. Willows here and there bowed mournfully, and many a portentous chasm met the good knight's glance. In particular, he remarked a great opening in the cliff, not ten lances' length from where he sat, and its rugged and gloomy appearance suggested danger and adventure to him. He walked his steed through the stream, and, gaining the cave, dismounted. A gloomy place, good sooth!—dark within as the cavern of Ogof, and even the very darkness made darker by shrubs and boughs which spread about the entrance thereto. Leading his steed, St. George stepped

forward, cautiously and wonderingly. The earth seemed regular, and, being above the river's level by a foot or more, was dry. He had not proceeded twelve paces when a blow on his helm caused him to unsheath his dagger ; but, as the harsh cry of a great bat, which with rustling progress flew past, explained the stroke, he returned it to his side with a smile. His steed reared and resisted, but a few words uttered in the deep tones of its master allayed its fright. So they proceeded, in utter blackness, and not knowing whither. St. George, regretting what he esteemed a useless task, seeing that the cave promised no end, was about to retrace his steps. He perceived, however, a light not far in advance, and, rightly conjecturing it must be some truant moon-ray which had entered through a cleft above, went on. Ere he reached it, St. George and his horse were precipitated into a chasm, but escaped with a few bruises. Thanking Providence, the knight collected himself and regained the bridle of his faithful companion. Darkness and uncertainty still !

As he communed with himself what course to take, he became sensible of a decrease in the obscurity. Gradually lessening, it at last gave way to a deep rich light, suffusing and revealing to him the high and spacious vault wherein he stood ; and the light came not from the moon, but was of an ambery hue. He surveyed the rough and shapeless enclosure in search of a path, which, indeed, seemed not to exist ; and as he gazed, a voice called sweetly from he knew not where, "Hither ! come hither, thou gallant knight !" and immediately the inhospitable walls before him were cloven as by a magician's wand, and a way appeared for man and horse. It seemed to him that fingers clasped his arm, and dauntlessly leading his steed, they reached, by sinuous passages, a brazen gate which blocked their progress. A marvel now ! for though the portal remained closed, St. George and his steed passed through it, as though it or they were spirits only. Led by the unseen fingers, they reached a great carpet, whose centre was of emerald colour. Still impelled, St. George and his steed strode onward ; but no sooner did they touch the centre than carpet and floor descended with them, and rested presently. Then our knight perceived that he stood in a beautiful hall, whose pavement was of jasper and gold, and whose perforated glass roof admitted precious perfumes. Figures in alabaster of knights and lovely ladies, were around him, and a soft music ravished his ear—such sweet and soothing strains as he had never heard before ! and they melted his heart into gentleness and love. Then a hidden choir of tender voices poured forth seducing melody, which floated away and left the knight with a sense of sadness in his breast. Thus for a brief space, and then the same sweet voices recalled his love. They sang these words :—

"Bravest of knights is he!
 Noblest of ladies she!
 O favoured knight!
 O happy fair!
 When Beauty bright
 And Bravery
 Their loves unite!
 How good to see!
 In earth or air,
 What can compare
 With gentle hearts in unity?"

And, with the echo, a bewitching maiden revealed herself to the strained eye of St. George. Fascinating in truth!—and as the knight's scrutiny met her own timid glance, she withdrew her eyes from him in modest confusion. She was evidently waiting to hear the knight's speech, and he did not delay it. Thrilled by her presence he cried, "Lady, who art thou? Do I behold a vision, or art thou like myself, no image, but a living reality?"

"Sir Knight"—and the maiden's tone was soft as the music of a dulcimer when touched by gentlest fingers—"Sir Knight! I know thee, and that thou art in quest of an afflicted ladye! Thou wishest to overcome her persecutor, and to rescue her from the toils with which she is surrounded. Thou hast learned to hate Icalon, and thy detestation of the sorcerer Malgreda is great. Sir Knight! thou already lovest his child Anasie"—the name riveted still more St. George's attention—"and longest to make her thine. But thou knowest not where she is; thy love is bestowed on one whom thou hast never seen. I—I alone—can guide thee to the fair Anasie!"

"Thanks, siren of this temple!—thanks a thousandfold!" he cried. "But who art thou, for I know not?"

She answered, "Her good angel, deputed by a higher power than that thou seest to guard and to befriend Anasie!"

"Spirit," he answered, with a heaving breast, "tell me—oh, tell me—where my good lance may avenge her wrongs, and these mailed arms enfold her lovely form!" The maiden smiled tenderly at his emotion, and her dark eyes shot inquiring glances into his.

"Darest thou, and darest thou? Bethink thee, Sir Knight, of the perils to encounter, and the self-denials thou must make! I know thee, and assure thee now that thine antagonist the dragon occasioned thee less effort than thy present enterprise shall, if undertaken. Yet, if thou art resolved,"—"By Heaven,

I am !” St. George interrupted, and his gauntlet smote his dagger. “ Then,” she continued, “ I will assist thee. Swear !”

The knight was about to repeat the formulary which the spirit, with uplifted finger, was on the point of uttering, when beyond her on the distant wall a scroll appeared, and he read, “ Trust not always to the voice of the charmer ! Fair appearances oftentimes delude, and the loveliest rose may veil the deadliest thorn !” Instinctively the knight felt for his talisman,—that wondrous gift of the old pilgrim whom he had, years ago, rescued from the Black Vampire of Egypt,—and, producing it from his bosom, spake thus :—“ Spirit, I hold a talisman, the which hath potency to discover for me both good and evil influences. I have heard thee say thou art the befriending angel of Anasie. Touch, then, this precious gift ; if true, I’ll follow thee to the world’s centre ; if false, discard thy counsel as the wily seductress sent forth by the malignant fiend !” With that, he made to approach ; but instantaneously, as her eye perceived the talisman, she, shrieking, faded from his sight, and the charged thunder rolled within the hall, and shot its lightnings around him. The pavement of jasper and gold became desert sand ; the surrounding images of knights and ladies, trees in the distance ; and the delicious perfumes, healthful odours of the early morn. St. George stood no longer within the glorious hall ; the dome of heaven was above him, and his faithful steed beside. And he knelt before the rising sun, and to its Maker offered fervent thanks that his journey had not been turned to nought by compliance with the wiles of the deluding spirit. Then he upsprang, and tightening the girths of his horse, he addressed himself to the prosecution of his search. Over the sand he rode until, arriving at a spot shaded by a few acacias, he reclined, and partook of a sober meal, not forgetting his companion. Then, mounting, he proceeded. Suddenly cries as of distress met his ear. Spurring his steed, he rode towards the point wherefrom they came, and surprised a gigantic Marabout—as he seemed by his dress and the girdle which he wore—in the act of plundering a wounded stripling. The youth lay extended on the ground, blood oozing from a great gash in his forehead, and his voice gradually dying away with his life. Throwing himself from his steed, “ Hold, wretch !” St. George shouted passionately ; “ thou hast me for a foe !” The seeming Marabout retreated from the boy, over whom St. George bent inquiringly. “ Let me raise thee,” he said, taking him in his embrace. But, as though in death, the arms of the stripling closed around St. George, and the good knight felt he was in the grasp of an emissary of the evil one. Powerless, his body being as it were enclosed in bands of iron, he saw the Marabout approaching with unsheathed

dagger, and exulting triumph in his eye. The knight struggled vainly ; but his strength, though weak in itself, so shook his fettered body that the precious talisman was jerked from his breast and fell on the lad beneath. St. George was free, and his discomfited confiner, changing into a serpent, ran from him. But the Marabout ! No longer so, he stood forth undisguised,—a gigantic creature, utterly deformed in limb and shape, glaring with baffled hatred on the released knight, and advancing, with huge strides and uplifted mace, to crush him ! “ God and the Right ! ” our hero cried, and drew his sword. “ Yield thee ! ” his adversary yelled, and aimed a terrible blow which St. George avoided dexterously. “ Not to thee, thou foul and hideous thing ! ” and with these words he dealt the enemy a great blow which brought him to the ground. Then, with his sword well balanced for the death-stroke, St. George stood over him. But an encircling armour of iron spikes a yard long suddenly appeared to avert the blow, and the gigantic enemy laughed aloud. “ Not thus,” he cried, “ thou slayest a genie ! ” And receding from the protecting barrier, the monstrous wretch, by his witchery, transformed the spikes into simple bullrushes, on which St. George gazed wonderingly. He would have pressed through them, but immediately a cloud of locusts darkened the air, and when they had passed his eye beheld only the vacant desert. His enemy was gone, and a low laugh smote his ear ! And as he surveyed the bullrushes they seemed to change into uncouth shapes, and a spell came over him, and he fell senseless. When he recovered, a travel-stained pilgrim, or recluse, as he appeared to be, was bending above him, striving to arouse the afflicted knight. By his kindly offices, St. George soon regained his senses, which in truth had been obscured by the foul sorcery of the monster. He learned that the recluse was he who had reared the memorial shrine, and for a full hour the two conversed of what had occurred. Then St. George with grateful words took leave of his friend, on whom he would have forced some more substantial gift. But the recluse said, “ Nay, my son ! good deeds carry their own reward ; and he who accepts a return for kindness robs himself of the gem which it contains. Shouldst thou befriend the distressed, receive their thanks, but nought beside ; for the gratitude of one true heart surpasses the treasures of Golconda ! ” With that they separated, but not until St. George had partaken of the food which the good man carried in the wallet on his back. Mounting, the knight proceeded, and for a time encountered nothing. At last he perceived a smoke arising from the plain, and, riding to it, came upon three robbers, as they seemed. With a shout at his sudden appearance in the valley, which had disguised his approach, the foremost, leaping to his feet,

aroused his comrades, and the band stood expectantly. "Who art thou?" cried a stalwart ruffian, eyeing St. George with distrust. "George, whilom of Cappadocia!" the good knight replied; "and ye?" "Enemies of thine to the death, as thou shalt discover!" and with levelled spears they advanced to the combat.

Our knight retreated a few paces; then, riding round them at his best speed, he gradually closed, and by a clever use of his rein broke their discomfited phalanx, and crying "God and our Ladye!" pierced with his lance the foremost through his heart; then, as the others assailed him, he smote another with his falchion and laid him low for ever. The surviving wretch would have fled, but a few strokes of his spur brought St. George upon him, and the robber fell, transfixed by his fatal lance. Dismounting, he knelt by the side of his dying foe, and held before his glazing eye the cross which our knight carried in his bosom, but with a faint cry the ruffian breathed his iniquitous soul away, and all was still! And the quiet that succeeds death has something in it to excite awe. Then St. George opened the robber's corslet and found a paper which he perused. It was torn and soiled, and little could be gleaned from it, but this:—

"Icalon to his trusty myrmidons!—When ye shall * * * * *
remove her to * * * remembering that a hero hath undertaken
* * * * * and Malgreda shall reward ye!"

The corslets of the other wretches enclosed nought. St. George, spurning them with his armed heel, mounted, and presently (winding through the valley) entered a defile whose overhanging rocks frowned on him. Many a wild animal fled at the clangour of his horse's hoof, and many an unearthly scream saluted him from the carrion birds which marked his approach as they studded the crags and peaks. Following the dry bed of a past torrent, St. George at length emerged from the gloomy pass, and beheld a city's towers three furlongs before him. As he rode along he discovered a spring, by which, with heedless feet, a damsel stood. She was gazing on its waters with an absent eye; an emblem of patient suffering not unmingled with despair. Gently approaching, our knight, dismounting, accosted her, and it seemed to him that he had never previously beheld so fair a damsel. Her long dark tresses flowed negligently adown her snowy neck, and her features were chiselled as by a master hand which excelled in the production of grace and beauty. But she cared little to preserve that master's work, as was seen by the signs of a constant grief in her poor heart, which shrouded her face with an expression of deep-set agony.

“Maiden, fear not!” he said, “I perceive distress in thine attitude, and despair in thine eye. In me regard the champion of the afflicted: George of Cappadocia, thy friend ere he knows thy story!”

As though trouble had erased every feeling of surprise or fear, the damsel looked up with gentleness in her eye. “O Knight,” she faltering said, “thou art not unknown to me, for I have heard of thy prowess. Protect me and I will bless thee, for indeed I am afflicted!”

He took her hand, which she withdrew not. “Maiden, I will, if Fate herself said ‘Nay!’ Tell me thy wrongs and how to redress them!”

At that moment a great sepulchral blast swept from the city wall, and as she heard it, the damsel, shaking with fear, cried, “Ala s, alas! I must be gone. My father summons me, and I dare not disobey. Ah me!”—the rising tears suffused her brilliant eyes, and she bowed her head in deepest grief.

“Damsel! think not of it,” said St. George, his bronzed cheek flushing with indignant blood; “I will protect thee. Only tell me what threatens thee.” Gently beseeching, he at length restored courage to her heart, and she poured forth her confidence with many a bitter sigh. A knight whom she detested for his villanies wooed her, and her father held her in captivity until the recreant should have performed certain conditions. A gallant youth who had in love and pity espoused her cause, had fallen by the lance of her persecutor. She was proceeding to recount the circumstances when the terrible blast again came forth on the affrighted air from the city, and she trembled as the aspen. St. George prayed her to continue her narrative: he had learned that her persecutor was Icalon the Seven-Fingered, and his heart said, “This is the damsel whom thou lovest.” She might have resumed, but a cloud of dust upsprang before the distant city, and out of it came a gigantic rider with fifteen or more followers, all armed *cap-a-pie*. Then the maiden cried, “Sir Knight! to God I commend thee. Be prudent, vigilant, and true, and by thy quality I beseech thee, oh, remember Anasie the afflicted!” She sped away with the lightness of the gazelle, and St. George had only a moment to mount ere the assailants—that gigantic figure heading them—burst on him like a swollen torrent. Dexterously wheeling his steed he obtained their flank, then, ere they could recover their horses, charged through their midst and galloped at full speed from the city, they pursuing. Wheeling again, with couched lance, he met them firmly; bore down their giant leader, and again broke the line; then turned his horse’s head to the left and rode hotly past the city walls. Relinquishing the chase, his assailants gathered up their prostrate and disarranged chief, and returned to their stronghold. And as St. George pricked over the



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plain he, turning his head towards the city, became conscious of a white kerchief waving from a casement in its highest tower.

By-and-by he reached a mountain range, and wound along a disused path made perilous by rocks and stones which had fallen from the cliffs above, and were slippery with the mountain haze. Thinking of Anasie's story he proceeded right carefully, and entering a gloomy place hemmed in by great precipices, dark and boding, his horse's tramp aroused some waterfowls which, shrieking, flew away from the rock on which they had sat, and, with many a dip, hasted across the shadowed lake. His glance instinctively reverted to their first place, and he saw that which led him to spur towards it vigorously. St. George came upon a richly-caparisoned steed, grievously wounded and dying, rearing itself on the rock in the last agonies of death, and the ensanguined foam staining its neck. At its feet lay a gallant knight, mangled and resting in his gore. His arm was raised as though to smite a fallen enemy, but evidently his own spirit had fled ere the stroke could be given. In victory he seemed vanquished. St. George recalled Anasie's story of the knight who had engaged in her cause, and as he looked on the poor bleeding body, he cried, "By heaven, 'tis the work of Icalon; but whether his or not, Anasie's knight shall be avenged, if Providence guide me to the wretch that hath done this." And leaving the mournful spectacle, St. George pressed onward.

CHAPTER III.

The Harper's Story—The Black Knight and the Holy Cross—St. George hath a Relic!—The Harper's Prophecy—St. George's Departure—Attacked by a Savage Lion, he worsts him, and follows to his Haunt—The Work of Death—Issue from the Lair—The Ruined Castle—The Encounter—"Hold, Knight!"—The Beleaguering Spirits of Malgreda's Conjurations—Escape of Icalon—St. George Powerless—Falls on his Shield.

LONG he rode by the margin of that gloomy lake, whose silent, lifeless waters, heavily and as it were unwillingly, reflected the battlemented towers which rose from its western side, and seemed to bewail their decay. And as the path ended in a forest, whose tall trees were shadowless in the absence of the noon-day sun, whose beams refused to penetrate the density, St. George, alighting, led his steed. Carefully clearing a way, however rough, by separating and putting back the obstructing branches, the knight proceeded; and as his horse pricked its ears, he heard the sound of a harp in advance. The sound died away as he went on, and silence prevailed. No doubt the harpist's ear had caught the crackling of the branches and the noise of the hoof. Then, as though convinced that a noble and generous comer approached, and not any cause of alarm, the harpist struck his instrument right boldly, and sang a little song of welcome. And our knight, entering a moss-grown dell, perceived an aged man, white-haired and bent, who, sitting upon the boll of a great fallen beech, awaited him. St. George prayed the good old harpist to explain the reason why he welcomed him; and that worthy octogenarian made answer, "In that I ever hail the coming of Valour and Virtue."—"But knowest thou me?" St. George inquired.—"Ay, well!" and accompanying the song on his harp, the old man sang thus:—

"What shall the good knight do—
 He, the brave red-cross knight?
 Shall Vice, and Shame, and Malice thrive,
 And Guilt laugh loud at Innocence,
 And sorceries shadow Purity,
 And blight its bloom?
 Not while the good knight breathes!

His valiant arm
Shall crush the strength
Of him whose hand is red with blood—
Shall overcome
His subtle frauds,
And seeth the sword of justice in his gore!"

The song ended. "What meanest thou, father?" asked St. George. "I mean," the harper said, "that in thee I behold the good knight, and that ere the stars shine forth again thou shalt encounter him whom thou hast cause to hate. But thine arm, though it strike, may not avenge, this day. Thou hast great perils in store ere the demon knight be slain. But divert not from thy purpose; thou shalt succeed if thou faintest not. Or man or devil, give not way, and the holy cross shall ever guard thee. The Black Knight tempts his fate; be thou the privileged dispenser of his meed. Fare thee well, St. GEORGE! as thou shalt hereafter be styled; be thou but true and strong of heart! Fare thee well!" and the harper, slinging his harp at his side, went painfully into the gloom, and was lost to sight. St. George, reclining thoughtfully at the foot of a huge forest-tree, scarcely remarked the restless pawing of his horse. By every sign the animal could give, it strove to arrest his attention; now champing its bit uneasily, and now snorting forth a summons. The cause appeared! Warily surveying him, furthest from his horse, but not two lances' length from where he lay, the knight perceived a great head, whose glaring, blood-shot eyeballs foretokened coming battle. The shaggy mane, shaking with rage, was of a sombre hue in the obscurity; but St. George well understood how tawny it would be were the sun there to reveal the true character of its owner. He had encountered many a wild beast of the forest, but never such a terrible lion as this. Maintaining a calm aspect, and fixing the monster with his eye, he slowly disengaged his dagger; adjusted the fastenings of his mail; firmly seated his helm, and, slowly uprising, stepped before his trembling horse, and addressed himself to the encounter. The lion, as though mechanically, stayed its rolling glances, and, looking straight at St. George, stepped into the arena. A noble beast, in truth! made greater by the gloom of the dell. St. George, determining to await the attack, stood with his left arm outstretched, his right foot slightly back, and his armed dexter hand uplifted. Thus, for some moments, stood the combating foes; then, with a roar that echoed far and wide, the lion sprang upon him. Leaping aside nimbly, St. George aimed a thrust which sheathed his blade in the beast's flank; and ere the lion could recover himself, he grappled with it.

Over and over they rolled ; the horse wrestling with its rein, and striving to break away from the tree, where it stood a dismayed spectator. But St. George had the lion in his strong grasp ; his hands were at its throat, and his dagger was drinking its heart's blood. Not once did it disengage itself. Not once were its sharp teeth effective ; for his was a life-battle, and he knew it. Man and beast, they fought for the space of a half-hour, until the ground reeked with hot blood, but not of St. George. Never relinquishing his grasp, he plunged and plunged again his deadly blade into the lion's breast ; then, with a great effort, got his knees on its body, and pierced it through the brain. With one loud cry, the lion rolled over in death, and St. George arose from the conflict without a wound. His spirit was now fully roused ; and after glancing at his subdued foe, he walked to whence it had come, and saw through the leaves and trees a track with many a beast's footprint on it. Following the track, he arrived at a cave, which he entered cautiously. There he found three cubs of the old lion, and these he speedily despatched ; then, issuing from the lair, returned to his good steed, which, by this time, was, from very terror, bathed in foam. A few gentle words and caresses restored the horse ; and St. George, leading it by its bridle, proceeded through the forest shades, until he came upon a desolate castle, which upreared from the valley, and disclosed numerous dismantled gates and entrances. A moat surrounded it on three sides ; the fourth, if any moat had been, was dry and desert. Having thus emerged from the forest, St. George, mounting, rode until he had gained the desert side of the castle, and bent his course away. But the clatter of a horse's hoofs caused him to check his speed, and, looking back, he beheld a knight in black armour furiously riding towards him.

The knight made as though he would have passed, but St. George, leaping from his horse, seized the stranger's bridle, crying, " Hold, knight ! I speak with thee an thou wilt or no ! "

With lance elevated, the stranger surveyed him through his visor. " If thou knewest me," he replied, " thou might not be so bold, O Knight of the Red Cross ! "

" And wert thou acquainted with my name," our hero responded, " thou wouldst, peradventure, lower thy tone, Sir Braggart ! "

" Who art thou ? " the stranger asked.

" First, let me know *thy* name," St. George made answer.

With a proud and insulting scowl, his interlocutor said, " Icalon, the Seven-Fingered ! "

“And I,” was the response, “am George of Cappadocia, thy foe to the death!”

With that he threw himself upon Icalon, who, unprepared for the attack, reeled in his saddle, and fell heavily to the earth, our hero upon him. Struggling fiercely, the Seven-Fingered at last recovered his horse, and, leaping on its back, charged our hero, who, with a few bounds, regained his own good steed, and, mounting, with levelled lance spurred to the combat. Great was the meeting, and again Icalon rolled on the sand; but ere St. George could pursue his advantage, the forms of misshapen demons gathered round him with horrible gibbering cries, and, as though fascinated, his spear dropped from his hand. Then, as his shield left his side, and, clattering, rested on the plain, St. George fell heavily upon it, and his senses left him! For Malgrede's familiars had been summoned to assist Icalon—and with the spirits of air who may contend?

CHAPTER IV.

St. George Awakes in a Dungeon—His Adventures there—The promised *Auto-da-fé*—His Escape—His Steed Recovered—The Alarm—Obstacles to his Escape—Safe Exit—Benighted—The Weird Figure—Anasie's Sainted Mother—She bespeaks Protection for Anasie—The Chilling Wind—The Globes of Fire—St. George's Steed's Mad Career—The Torrent—The Leap—The Fall—The Brazen Ring—The Clangour—The Potent Spirit—The Relic, and Discomfiture of the Enemy—St. George hemmed in!

WHEN St. George opened his eyes, he found himself in a gloomy dungeon, reclining on an iron bed of clumsy make. The only furniture in the room was a rough table and a few uncouth stools. A pitcher of water rested at his elbow, and he slaked his burning thirst. As he drank, the door creaked on its rusty hinges, and Icalon entered. St. George knew him by his disproportioned hands, though in all else he might have been unrecognized. No longer wearing his helm and visor, he appeared a man of middle age, dark and sullen, with heavy brows shading a face which would have been handsome had not a great scar disfigured his right cheek.

"I have come to glut my revenge," he said. "Nay! rage not at my words; for within call there are those who would give to the winds the souls of a thousand Georges! I have come to tell thee that thou art securely mine, and that ere to-morrow's sun thy bones will be whitening on the highest gibbet in my castle!" With a bitter laugh he departed.

St. George, prudent as bold, had restrained his anger. He now rose from his rough couch, and, convincing himself of Icalon's distant footsteps, proceeded to examine his prison. It was lighted (but how dimly!) by a small window made secure with bars. In returning from it—he had swung himself up by his hands—his foot, striking the floor, awakened a hollow noise, which suggested a passage beneath. He returned to his bed, thinking the sound might have been heard. He was right; for presently the door opened again, and a misshapen dwarf, of muscular make and demoniac presence, appeared. This creature glanced scrutinizingly here and there; then, as if satisfied, approached the knight, and croaked hoarsely this greeting:—"Welcome, my master! the faithful attendant of the Seven-Fingered bids thee welcome! While thou art his guest, thou shalt want nothing. This brimming goblet"



(he satirized the earthen pitcher) "shall be thine, and the choicest ambrosial confections" (with this he took a dirty morsel of bread from his side, and tossed it to St. George) "at thy service. Call for what thou wilt: one wish of thine will be satisfied as readily as another. And this hospitality thou shalt receive until the reward which Icalon my master gives to his good friends shall be dealt unto thee! Be of good cheer! Icalon loves thee much, and will honour thee on the morrow!"

With these bitter and gibing words the ugly dwarf departed; and though neither key nor bolt sounded, St. George felt how securely the door was closed. A secret spring, opening from the outside, no doubt held it; and as he thought over his incarceration, he became convinced that the dungeon door would never open to his efforts. He proceeded, with caution, to examine the floor of the room; but, though near the window it sounded hollow, he could detect neither spring nor slide. Raging, he stamped his foot in despair; when lo! the wood parted, and a trap-door was revealed. His foot had accidentally discovered the secret. And to-morrow he was to perish, as the mysterious words of his gaolers indicated! Then to-day, and at once, must he act!

Silently stepping down the flight of steps beneath the trap-door, he entered a vault, dark and clammy, whose sinuous length terminated in a dead wall. Feeling about for a spring, he at last touched a knob of iron which, pressing, caused the stone it was in to give way; and St. George, inserting his hand, seized a wide ring of the same metal. This he pulled with his full strength, and presently the entire stonework sank, and he stepped into a courtyard overgrown with wild plants and sickly with the fumes of decaying branches, which seemed to have been steeped in some obnoxious liquid before piled up to perish. Warily looking forth he heard a great noise behind him, and hesitating no longer he crossed the courtyard at his full speed. Making towards a break in the wall, he let himself down, quickly but safely; the jutting stones offering a fair foot and hand hold. Descending some thirty yards, his feet rested on the ground; and, as the gradually nearing outcry which had met his ear grew loud and louder, his eye perceived his faithful steed tied to a ring in the wall of a tower to his right. The alarmed voices were approaching, and our knight decided on his plan. He started towards his steed, and had all but reached it when two men-at-arms rushed from the tower and stopped his progress; but only for a moment. Wresting a spear from the foremost he struck them aside as with the strength of Milo, and in another second had undone the bridle and was on his horse's back. Snatching up a

lance which leaned against the tower (he had cast away the first one in his haste), St. George with a wild shout spurred his horse and directed its head to the distant hills. No man followed him ; he had descended from the castle by a way which neither Icalon nor his adherents cared to take ; and when, retracing their path, they arrived at the tower, the two bruised men-at-arms dismally pointed to St. George's flying figure afar off, and chafed their wounded shoulders.

St. George abated his speed when he had obtained a safe distance, and rejoiced that he was not unarmed. The spear he held was no common one, and he had not, in his captivity, been divested of his armour or poignard. As the shades of night approached, and the sunbeams deepened in intensity, he entered the mountains by a path overhung with tall beeches. He had not ridden far—the hillside to his left thick with firs, and rustling with the passage of game—when a tall figure, made taller by the departing sun, obstructed him, and caused his steed to rear and leap uneasily. Recovering it, "Heaven !" cried St. George, "whom have we here ? Speak, I command thee !"

But as the woman's form stood stately before him, her long hair waving in the breeze, she seemed to gaze at him with sorrow and affection ; and his lofty tone faded into respect, and St. George awaited her reply with humility.

"Knight !" she said in mournful accents, while her dark, sunken eyes wore the expression of a deep-set distress, "listen to me. Malgredda the sorcerer had a wife whom, in a fit of passion, he slew. It has been given to her to watch over the daughter of Malgredda, her only child. In me behold the wife, murdered by that wretched sorcerer, and now appearing unto thee to bid thee be of a good heart, and to prosecute unceasingly thy generous purpose. Be strong, and let the blessings of a loving mother, the sorrows of a gentle child, and the baseness of a wizard father, sink deep into thy soul ! Go on from conquering to conquering ; part not with the talisman which thou bearest ; let thy first victim be the Seven-Fingered, and thy last Malgredda. Anasie need not plead for his life ; he is not her sire : by a second marriage, I became the partner of the wizard, whose foul conjurations eclipsed my abhorrence ; and the true sire of my child was Roderick the Blue-Eyed !"

"Gramercy !" cried St. George ; "the comrade of my journey to the holy shrine last year, who fell in battle with the Saracens !"

"The same," she said.

"Then, holy mother," he continued, "say no more ! By my respect for Roderick, by my hatred of Malgredda and Icalon, by thy prayers and the love



I bear for Anasie, she shall yet be rescued, if a true heart and strong arm hath potency."

The weird figure gazed on St. George with affection, and as he looked her form resolved itself into thin air, and all was still.

His steed now uttered a plaintive neigh, and champed its bit convulsively; and a chilling wind came from the mountain firs, and blew around him, until he shook with cold. It seemed to paralyze all motion; but, with an effort, he broke the spell, and spurred his affrighted steed. A new peril was in store. Suddenly, great balls of fire danced about and before the horse's eyes; and the air resounded with groans and moanings, as though spirits in distress were near. Fire-flashes revealed dread creatures in his path—things of foul shapes which gibbered and spat at him; and the thunder rolled through the mountains, as though the last day were at hand. In vain he wrestled with the horse; it overcame even the strength of his bridle-hand, and bore him away in mad career. Dashing onward, it reached a wild torrent, and leaped the angry gulf with a great effort; but, failing to recover its feet, rolled forward with a terrible noise. Luckily, St. George had disengaged his feet from the stirrups, and, springing aside, he alighted on solid ground, just as, with a loud echo, his steed's hoof struck on some metal substance in the earth. A brazen ring! and it opened a concealed door, through which ascended a monster dread to look upon. His height was nine cubits, and his mouth exposed great teeth, sharpened to a point, and reeking as with blood. In his left hand he bore a newly-severed head, from whose ghastly jaws the purple tide dripped horribly. His right hand grasped a great sword, the blade whereof was red with recent death. And this monster, surveying the knight, laughed aloud, and shook the severed head on high.

For a moment St. George bethought him of his dagger; but there was that about the monster which spoke of the Infernal. His talisman! With the remembrance, St. George drew it from his bosom, and crying, "God and the Right! For Purity and Innocence!" outstretched it. With a yell of defeated malice, the monstrous creature disappeared beneath the gulf from whence he had arisen, and the talisman's potency was complete. St. George, restoring it to his bosom, and patting his steed, which had regained its feet and stood spell-bound, sought to go forth. Alas! he had fallen into a natural trap, which talisman or relic (potent against spirits only) could not uncloset. He was hemmed in by great rocks, and it was night!

CHAPTER V.

St. George's Adventures in the Chasm—His Exit—Discovery of the Murdered Knights—"Good Friend!" he cried—Further Adventures—Hungry, he Eats of a Peculiar Fruit—Delirium—His Surprisal of the Fiends in Knights' Disguise—The Battle—His Madness, and the Talisman—Hangs it on his Lance—Victory—Thanks to his Lance!—The Upborne Talisman at its Point Exerts its Power—Recovery.

"*Il ne se conçoit pas!*" and St. George shrugged his shoulders. 'Twas saying, in effect, "I don't quite seem to see it!" How to extricate himself from the dreary place? But then, the night had surprised him, and until morning came he could hope to do nought. So our friend calmly addressed himself to slumber, first attaching his arm to his horse's bridle!

This night he slept long and soundly, and awoke refreshed. Then, with an assuring pat on his good steed's neck, he, in the rich morning light which penetrated his prison, entering overhead, sought an outlet. Vainly he walked hither and thither, hoping for a breach in the rocks. There was none! St. George made the alarming discovery that he was hermetically closed in with rocks unscaleable! What to do? The demon of the past night—his appearance and departure—occurred to him. Might not a point of egress exist in the floor of the chasm? Searching minutely, he detected a brazen ring, which had escaped his notice by the dust which covered it. And pressing heavily on this, the earth opened beneath him, revealing a secret path overhung with bushes. The distance from where he stood to this path was not great; and calling his horse, he sprang down and alighted safely, the beast following. Then St. George perceived that he was in a lane, as it seemed; but looking above, saw an iron door which had admitted him. Not staying to close the passage, he proceeded along, his horse's head almost touching the roof. The truth breaking upon him, he understood that what he had deemed a lane was in reality a cave; and, guided by the light which entered it from its furthest limit, he advanced into a broad valley, with distant hills bounding the horizon. As he emerged, what a sight greeted him! Almost at the cave's entrance, and hanging from the great trees which spread their branches about it, were the bodies and skeletons of fourteen knights and esquires—



some in armour, some stripped and shieldless; but all suspended by chains from the trees above!

Apostrophizing one, "Good friend!" St. George said, slowly, "it may be that I give thee another companion ere sunset. But whether then or not, should I surprise the recreant who hath placed thee thus, he shall recount to thee, in the Shades, the pleasurable circumstances of our meeting!" And with an inward conviction that to Icalon and Malgreda the deaths of these knights and squires were due, St. George departed mournfully.

Winding along the valley side, he skirted the mountain's foot and came on a well whereat he drank. The water slaked his thirst, but created an unnatural sensation of hunger, and our knight looked about him ravenously. He could perceive nothing to satisfy his pangs, save some blood-red berries on a distant tree. But the sight even of them seemed to arouse him, and he galloped to where the poor fruit hung, and gathering ate in haste. Sweet they were to his palate; and he gathered all within his reach. But suddenly a fury possessed him—he knew not why or wherefore—and his brain burned. The poisoned fruit dropped from his extended hand, and with maddest delirium he put spurs to his horse and dashed away. He sped like the wind through covert and dell, by mountain-side and gloomy wood; still urging his horse to its utmost speed, and laughing wildly as he went. In this way he entered a valley and perceived a group of knights (as they seemed) riding in close order. Madly spurring into their midst, St. George struck right and left with his falchion, crying "God and the Right! For Innocence and Beauty!" But the knights closed about him, and his danger was imminent when his talisman fell from his breast, and as they saw it each arm was arrested; the knights retreating slowly with muttered oaths of dismay. In his madness, St. George passed his lance through the sacred relic, then, ere they could prepare for the onset, charged the knights again. His lance-point touched them not!—the talisman was potent indeed. For instantly knights and horses disappeared, and in their place were trooping fiends of hideous aspect, who tremblingly fled before the blessed gift. The victory was of heaven, and St. George, not yet recovered, but seeing things as through a glass, knelt before his good lance and offered up his prayers to it. He thought his weapon had gained the day; in truth, his impulse had been so sudden that all remembrance of having trans-fixed his talisman had passed from him. So he prayed to his lance—poor knight, whose reason lay hidden for the time—and reverentially addressing the point, he said, "O lance! companion of St. George who now apostrophizes thee! How great art thou! How hast thou served thy master! To thee he

kneels in gratitude ! Fail him not, O lance ! let thy good point work mightily for him ! ”

He knew not what he said, but as he heedlessly regarded the barb whereon the talisman was fixed, a mist seemed to disperse from his sight, an oppressive weight left his brain, he appeared to wake from some strange dream ; and, no longer mad, arose with thankfulness in his heart to the God who had restored him. “ Blessed talisman ! ” he said, “ thou art indeed potent to aid and to revive ; I value thee as the minister in secret of Truth and Right, and pray thee to desert me never ! Not that my heart is wanting in stoutness, but God is over all ; and mortal hands alone cannot presume to cope with secret fiends ! ”

CHAPTER VI.

The Ancient Cross—The Monastery—The Dark Pool—The Dwarf of Icalon arises and bids him Despair—St. George's Determination—The Sable Knight—The Combat—Approach of Monks—"Victory for the Right!"—St. George's Conquest—Invitation to the Monastery—His Arrival—His Sleep—Surprised by Traitor Monk—Retribution—St. George, fearing Priestly Vengeance, Flies.

PROCEEDING, our knight sighted a beaten track which led to a monastery in the distance, and, pressing on, speedily gained a position whence the full prospect lay visible. An ancient and curiously-wrought cross rose from the valley, whose centre was formed by a pool, stagnant and shrouded with green film, alike noxious to eye and smell. The mountain rose beyond, well wooded for half its height. And the vale was soft to his horse's hoof, as though nature had laid down her best velvet for the occasion. Yet the place seemed cursed—a very devil's decoy as you would have said. Ambling playfully, St. George's steed went on, but suddenly started back. The knight then saw an uncouth, dwarfed creature some fifty paces in front, and without difficulty he recognized the misshapen gaoler of his confinement.

"Ho, ho!" that miserable deformity cried, "ho, ho! thou lovest me so greatly, Sir Knight, that thou must needs come again to solicit my friendship and protection! Would I could extend them! but for once I must refuse thee. I cannot hope, in truth, to welcome thee as heretofore; the sweet dainties which I would give to thee, wert thou my guest (thou rememberest?), are withheld." Then lowering his harsh voice, and ceasing his bantering tone and language, the dwarf said, "Sir Knight! if thou hast to make thy peace with heaven, be chary of the moments; for *he* cometh who will make thee captive to his lance, and absolve thee with his sword!" Thus speaking the dwarf disappeared.

St. George, warming to the threatened encounter, adjusted his gear and habiliments, then rode on towards the monastery; but as he approached the clatter of hoofs sounded, and he beheld the sable knight, Icalon, advancing at a gallop.

Within fair speaking distance, the Seven-Fingered drew rein, and cried, "Sir Knight, surrender!"

"To whom?" St. George replied—"to thee? Not so; I have sworn to lower thy crest, and, by Heaven! this day I will essay it!"

They spake no more, but made ready for the onset. At the first meeting, the sable knight strove to strike St. George's visor; but his lance glided harmlessly by. St. George, too, who had aimed at Icalon's breast, was unsuccessful, owing to the rearing of his steed. They were about to engage again, when two monks drew near, on their way to the monastery.

"What do ye?" cried one.

"For God and the Right!" shouted St. George. "For Purity and Innocence!"

"Against whom?"

"Icalon!" the sable knight replied; "the friend of his own friends, and of others' friends the enemy!"

And the contest was resumed. St. George struck the shield of Icalon on its central boss, and as that knight reeled in his saddle, St. George grappled with him; but the dwarf, suddenly appearing, seized our hero's rein, and his surprised steed leaped wildly aside, thus allowing the afflicted knight to regain his position and ride back. The dwarf shouted out words of exultation; and his master, bidding him stand aside, seemed disposed to renew the encounter, but, quickly changing his mind, he galloped away into the recesses of the forest; his attendant imp mocking the efforts of St. George to follow—his horse, terrified by the dwarf's presence, refusing to advance a step. Then the monks approached, and, with courteous words, besought our hero to go with them.

"Champion of the Truth!" they said, "we know thee by thy proud bearing and the device on thy shield. Accompany us to our monastery, and we will refresh thee for the morrow. Right gallantly hast thou sustained the fray; and hospitality shall ever be given to him who is stout of heart in a good cause."

Icalon's imp had followed his master, and, no enemy appearing, St. George bowed to the welcome of his friends, and signified his acquiescence. They entered the monastery; and, having seen his horse stalled and fed, St. George sat down with his holy companions to a frugal repast. He recounted certain of his adventures, including that with the murdered knights, and found his story by no means surprised the listening monks. Others had joined them, and one especially glanced ever and anon at our hero with a peculiar expres-



sion in his eye boding no good. St. George noted it, but said nothing; and presently, accepting the offer, was shown by the first monk to his sleeping apartment, prepared with exquisite cleanliness, but spare of comforts. He was, however, too much the soldier to have many personal wants; and throwing himself on the humble truckle-bed, he essayed to sleep. The recollection of that sinister monk forbade slumber, and he lay awake musingly. The sun went down behind the distant hills, and the stars came out in the clear sky. One bright particular orb fixed his attention, and he gazed at it long and earnestly, unable to divest himself of its mysterious influence. He could hear the monks at prayer; then silence spread around, and the monastery slept in the moonlight. Contemplating the bright star, his thoughts reverted to bygone days, when companion knights, now dead, had shared with him many a peril and adventure; and at length he relapsed into that peculiar state between sleep and wakefulness. The disguised and cautious tread of a foot suddenly caught his ear, and regaining his powers, he listened as he lay. Not stirring, save with wary hand to loose his dagger, he perceived the sinister monk softly enter the room, and with bated step regard him. The intruder stood revealed in the moonlight, his hand grasping a long and glittering blade.

“Malgreda!” he murmured, “assist me now, and by thy spells confound Icalon’s foe and thine, that he awake not, save where spirits groan in torment!”

With a stride he reached the bed, and raised his weapon. Quick as the lightning’s flash, St. George seized with one hand the descending arm, and with the other gagged his assailant. Then, springing lightly from his couch, he wrested the monk’s dagger from his grasp, and buried it in his heart. ’Twas the work of a few moments, and without a sound save the checked groan of the perfidious wretch as he fell dead. Removing his hand from the monk’s mouth, St. George surveyed the corpse, and, perceiving a glittering substance beneath its gown, undid the fastenings, when there appeared a complete body of chain armour!

“So!” muttered our knight, “the truth stands undisguised! For the base purposes of thy master Icalon, thou hast adopted a holy apparel, and dwelt in this monastery as a saintly monk! Of a truth, thy fellows here know it not, and, as I have slain thee, their undeserved malediction may fall on my head, though I essay to prove its injustice. Doubtless thou hast sojourned with them for a time, and they regarded thee as a brother. I fear nor man nor devil, yet am I loth to receive the Church’s anathema! Let me perform an office for thee, thou wolf; and then, away!”

With that, St. George stripped the dead monk of his external dress, and, leaving him on the bed—a tall and portly man, clad in bright mail—he adjusted his helm, and departed. Passing through the silent corridors, he, without difficulty, discovered the stall wherein lay his good horse, and, leading him forth, regained the path outside, and cantered away in the moonlight.

CHAPTER VII.

St. George's further Adventures and Progress—His Arrival at the Court—The Wounded Knight—
St. George's Oath—The Conflict—St. George's Prowess—His Honours and Departure.

PASSING through the valley, St. George urged his steed up a shelving bank, and gained high ground. Following this, he perceived it was an enclosed plain; and, spurring to its limit, came to a great iron door which resisted his noisy efforts to open it. At length he espied a parchment hanging from one corner; and reading what appeared thereon in quaint characters, he cried aloud, "O potent talisman! what a friend art thou to him who bears thee!" With that he, drawing the gift from his breast, touched with it the massive gate, which flew open at once, and disclosed a beautiful garden wherein bloomed all manner of sweet-smelling flowers. He rode down a walk sided with prickly thorn, and had not proceeded a furlong when the cry of distress arose; and looking about he descried a man of great stature bearing away a damsel whose shrieks gradually became faint. Urging his horse, St. George gained the spot just as the maiden ceased to cry. She had swooned. "Hold, rascal!" he shouted; "unloose the damsel, or my sword shall acquaint itself with thy heart!"

The man set down his burden, and, with spear advanced, awaited the attack. It was not delayed. St. George, leaping from his saddle, with a sudden blow struck aside the fellow's weapon, and with a sturdy grasp shook him as he would a leaf. With that, the fellow prayed for mercy, and avowed himself a follower of the Seven-Fingered.

"And what doest thou here?" cried St. George, still holding him tightly.

"My master commissioned me to carry away this maiden," said the poltroon, "and I dare not refuse. Otherwise I wish her no injury, for I know her not!"

Spurning him, St. George bent over the fainting form and strove to revive her, but suddenly raising his head he was just in time to catch the robber's arm. That wretch had taken opportunity to draw his dagger, thinking he could strike St. George as he bent.

Vengeance flashing from his eyes, our hero with his mailed right hand seized his assailant by the throat, and maintained his clutch until the terrible death-rattle told that he was no more. Then, flinging him away, St. George returned to his ministering task, and was rejoiced to perceive signs of animation. His fair charge opened her beautiful eyes, and, as they sank beneath the glance of her preserver, blushed deeply. By degrees he assured her of safety, and she told her tale.

Her father tended the garden in which they stood, and as she frequently accompanied him from his cottage, she had (it seemed) attracted the attention of Icalon, who owned the garden, and was accustomed to visit it occasionally. That morning she had come earlier than usual, her father being absent on another errand; and while tending a parterre the wretch who had just expiated his attempt had assailed her and striven to carry her away.

St. George would, perhaps, have delayed his departure—and, indeed, there was that in the lovely damsel's eye to stay a far less susceptible knight—but she chanced to speak of the Court then being holden some leagues away, and of the beauty of the president Queen. So, escorting her to her father's cottage in the plain, St. George, with a kiss on her fair brow, bade her adieu! For an hour or more he rode along, and at length perceived a city's walls. He recognized them as an enemy's by the early sentinels who were already beginning to stud the ramparts. As he approached a cross-bow was levelled, and the shaft grazed his plume. With a laugh he rode along as before, and, passing the angle of the city, beheld a great concourse of knights and men surrounding the steps of a lordly castle-gate. A majestic figure stood thereon, her brow encircled by a crown, and a light armour of mail covering her body. Her train was upborne by two youthful pages, and behind her stood lords and ladies (as they seemed), gorgeously arrayed, but with alarmed countenances. Pressing forward, St. George saw a wounded knight reclining in the arms of two good cavaliers, who were bearing him to the feet of the crowned figure. The crowd gave way, and St. George with modest demeanour presented himself before the Queen, for such she was. He was welcomed right graciously, and by-and-by discovered that an enterprise was on foot (headed by her Majesty) to subdue the hostile city whose dark walls were in sight. The wounded knight had gone forth to reconnoitre, and had been attacked by a troop of Saracens who had unhorsed and would have slain him, but for the valour displayed by the two knights, who had rescued him after a gallant struggle. As St. George received this story at the lips of one in blue armour, he raised his hand to heaven, and said, "If I write not my name in characters of blood on yon city whose num-



bers assailed an individual knight, may my crest be shorn and my spurs lopped off !” And he besought the Queen to give him the foremost place in the coming fray. She willingly accorded the boon, for his name was an earnest of success.

As the sun rose high in the heavens, the army went forth to battle, St. George heading the van. With clumsy but effective machines the iron-studded gate was broken in, and our hero dashed forward dealing death around. Nought seemed to withstand his prowess, and before the day was two hours older the banner of England floated from the citadel, and the battle was lost and won. Then what rejoicings ! and how the Queen honoured her noble St. George ! But he had another duty to perform : Anasie was not yet rescued ; Icalon still breathed pollution and dismay ; the sorcerer had power to afflict the good and to defend the evil ! So, with many courtesies, the Queen unwillingly parted from him at his request, and St. George rode away with the acclamations of the whole army ringing in his ears.

CHAPTER VIII.

Adventures in the Valley—The Cheating Voices—Malgreda's Sorceries—Encounters the Friendly Knights who had previously released him from the Dragon—He recounts his subsequent Adventures—One of the Group scoffs at them—The Combat—"Knight, thou dost press me Sore!"—Victory—Avowal of the Vanquished—The Maiden Anasie—Has been carried off! Her Father's Stronghold—The Secret Fastness—The Knight's Death.

ST. GEORGE had not proceeded far when he descried the ugly dwarf squatting beneath a cliff, and watching him attentively. As the lion cares not to trample on the rat, so our knight scorned to pollute his blade with the blood of so mean a creature as Icalon's imp; but as he remembered how cautiously he must act to rescue Anasie, and that it was indispensable to root out her enemies wherever and whenever found, he started forth at a gallop to slay the miserable wretch who mocked him evidently. As St. George neared the cliff, the dwarf sprang nimbly from point to point, and at length obtained a sure footing on the summit, wherefrom his sardonic laugh floated down on the breeze. Our knight, giving up the attempt, rode on and entered a valley. Pausing a moment he looked towards the rock on which he had seen the dwarf; but that creature was no longer there. Almost ashamed at his zeal in so base a matter, St. George proceeded, and, having ridden a mile or more, found himself on the margin of a great morass, whose pitchy waters shone heavily in the sun, as ebony gleams before a lighted mirror. Dank and baneful exhalations rose from the unhealthy pools, and the sod of the valley had rotted around. There seemed no path; and St. George sat his horse despairingly. But suddenly he perceived the figure of a youth clambering the hill to his right hand. "Ho, boy!" he shouted, "what ho!" The youth heard him not, and again our hero challenged him. As his voice sounded through the valley and echoed from cliff and scar, the figure was hid by a conical hill, and St. George beheld him no more.

But a loud voice cried from afar, "Sir Knight, come hither!" And another voice responded from an opposite direction, "Hither, Sir Knight, lies the way!"

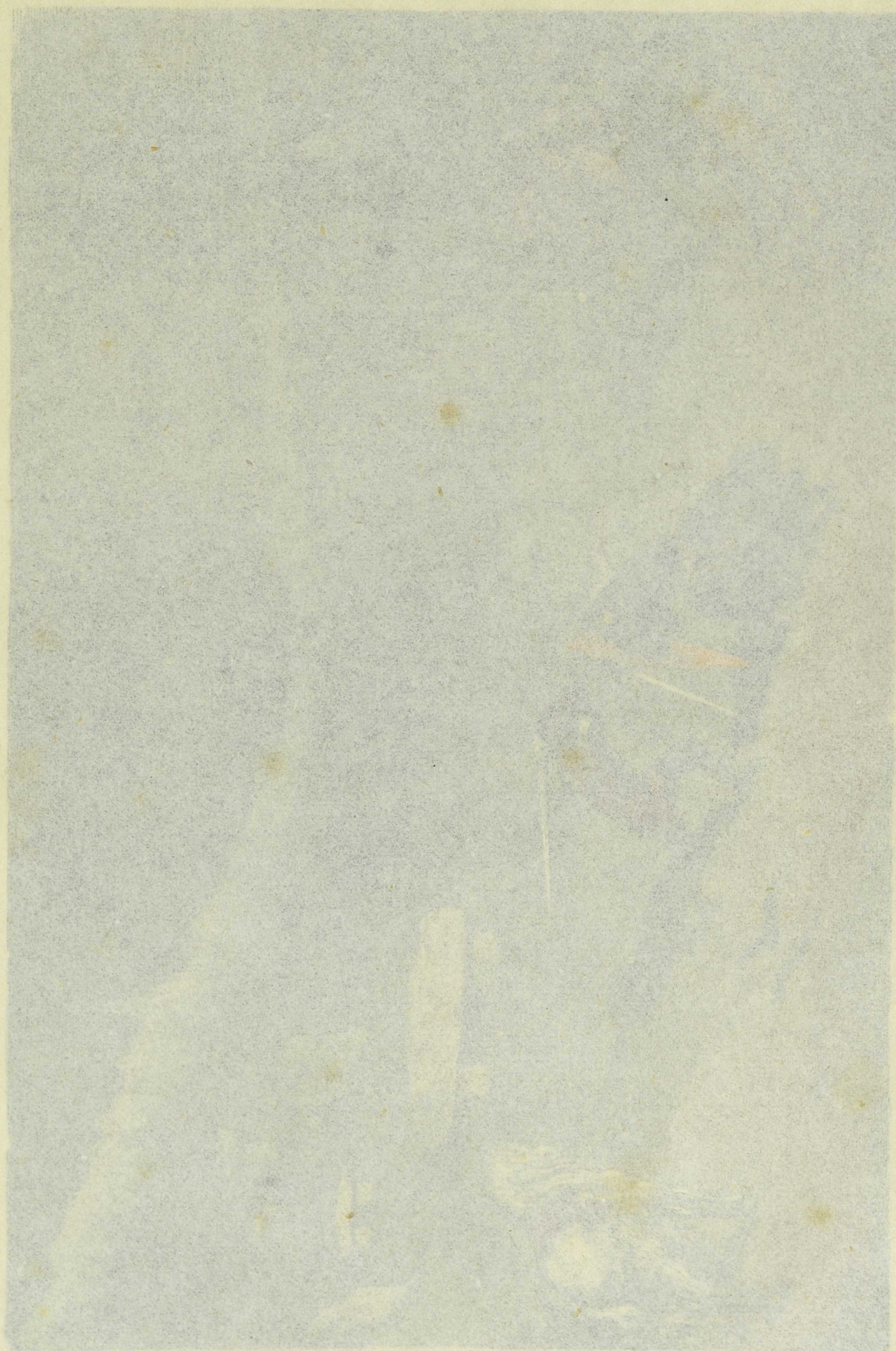
And with that the distant peaks, the water-courses, the chasms, and the air itself, became alive with outcries; and the universal words were, "Hither, come hither!"

Then a troop of armless and legless fiends, whose matted hair was bespattered with the foul substance of the bog, arose from its depths and rolled over each other until their memberless trunks were within a lance-length of the knight; and these, with hideous gibberings and mockings, cried, "Hither, come hither! St. George, we will greet thee right nobly! Come hither, come hither!" And as they sank beneath the foetid waters, the centre of the morass opened, and a tall gallows ascended, remaining fixed above its surface. From the cross-tree swung a figure in mail, and in it our knight recognized his double. Then, as the ghastly spectacle disappeared, a flaming scroll, held at its ends by demons whose deep eyes blazed malevolently, spread across the morass, and in letters of black St. George read, "Such shall be the fate of Malgrede's foe!"

The beleaguering voices had meanwhile continued to mock him from every hill; but as the flaming scroll and its supporting fiends passed away, they ceased, and all was silence. St. George laughed long and loud. "So these are the weapons with which the sorcerer thinks to slay my courage and my hopes together! Ho, ho, 'tis a merry masque this! a merry, merry masque! Verily, Malgrede understands me not, else would he never tempt me to laughter with these follies! They might terrify the souls of some; but I have vanquished realities too often to quail before appearances now! By Heaven, Malgrede, thou but whettest the blade that shall exterminate thee and thy foul confederacy when the good time arrives!" Thus saying, St. George retraced his steps, and rode into a plain well wooded to the right, and rich with verdure. Proceeding, he beheld a dilapidated wall of rough stone, half enclosing the plain, and having watch-towers at irregular distances. He also perceived several cromlechs, cairns, and stones placed transversely on others; but these things engrossed him not. He saw them, but he saw besides what called a glow of pleasure to his cheek. Three furlongs away were a body of knights, and his quick eye recognized them as the friends who had received him on their shield when escaping from the tower of the dragon. How cheerily they greeted him! How their voices resounded with welcome—welcome to the Red-Cross Knight! From them he learned that the plain where they stood had been, in times bygone, a neutral ground whereon altars were raised to Minerva, and the desolated wall built for their protection. That evening, on the verdant carpet, while the rich sunset glorified the scene, St. George made merry with his comrades, and De Tracy's songs received the applause of voice and goblet. Our hero, as in duty bound, told certain of his adventures, and the listening knights vied with each other in their admiration. But there was one, Rodolph the Red-Haired, who affected to scoff at the narrative,

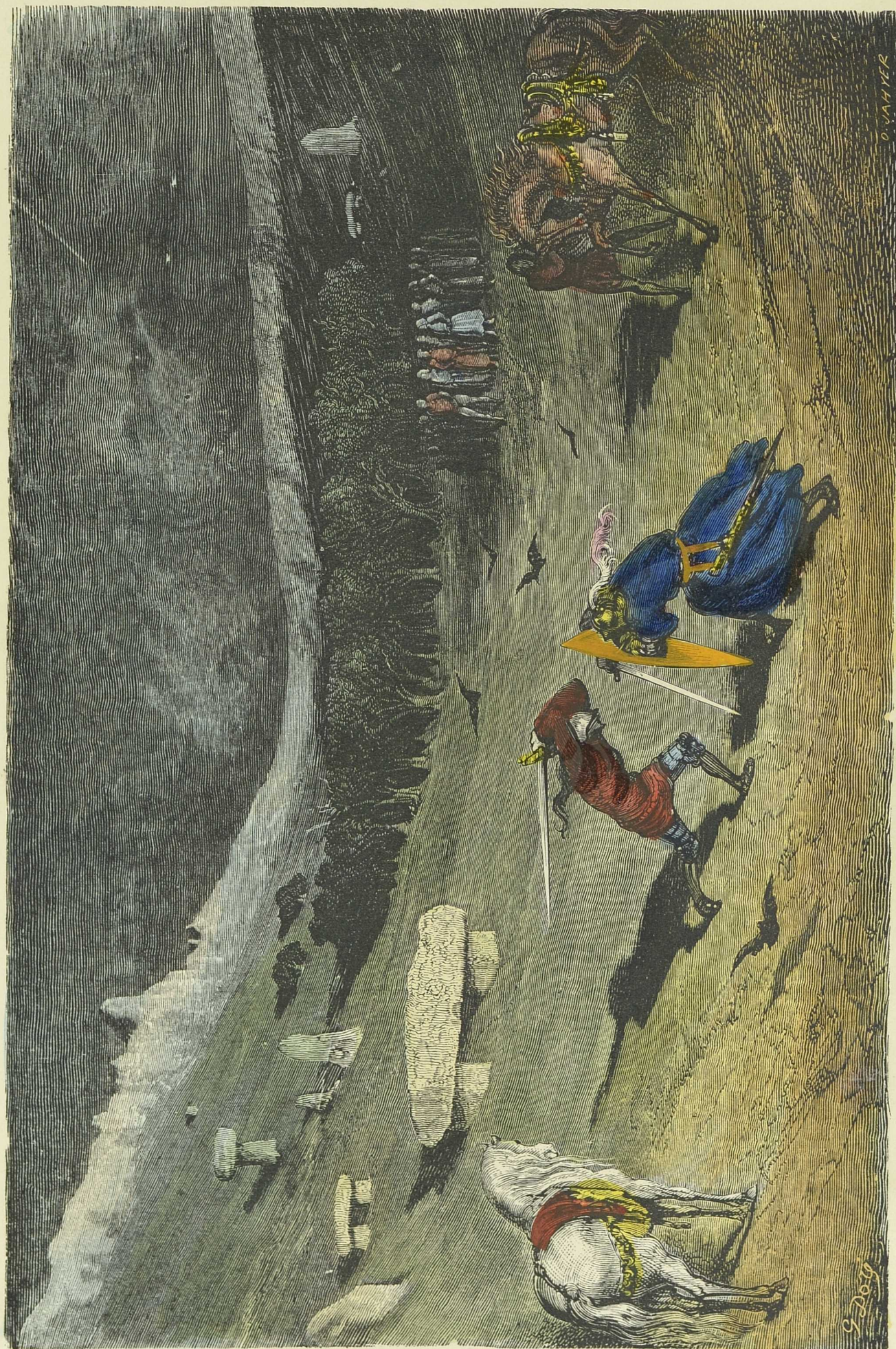
and, inflamed by wine, started upon his feet and said, "I have heard of a beast in Ethiopia who eats men by the score, but never have I seen him!" "There are many things thou hast not seen!" St. George replied, with scornful coldness; "for example, thou hast not seen the knight who would stoop to use thee as his footboy!" "This to me!" cried Rodolph; "by all I hold sacred, I will reckon with thee anon!" "Thou swearest," St. George responded, "by thine own coward self; but, an thou desirest it, I will talk to thee at lance's point on the morrow. Thou hast given the lie to my story; I will offer thee to the gods as its moral!" So it was ordered that St. George and the Red-Haired should try their prowess next day; and with that the quarrel seemed to terminate, and the brimming cup went round, and the knights made merry until the evening shades prevailed.

With the morrow came our knights to the combat; Rodolph the Red-Haired bestriding a noble Arab, and St. George mounted on his own well-tried horse. At the first shock, St. George bore his opponent to the earth; but, leaping to his feet, Rodolph drew his great two-handed sword, and dared St. George to meet him. Our knight, giving his animal to a squire, advanced, unsheathing his own terrible blade, whose temper had been proved in many a bloody encounter. Long and fiercely they engaged, Rodolph acquitting himself above all expectation, his blows resounding as they met the protecting shield of St. George. *He* for a time defended himself only, wishing to prove the real capabilities of the Red-Haired; but at last he cried, "Rodolph! I know thee now, but thou knowest me not. Thou canst not make me bend; now shalt thou break to me!" With that, assuming the offensive, St. George smote the knight to his knees with a great blow, and called upon him to acknowledge his defeat. "Not to thee, mushroom!" cried the envious and malignant knight; "with another weapon shalt thou meet me on more equal terms," and throwing aside his Damascus blade, he drew his dagger. The assembled knights would have stayed further combat, but St. George's blood was roused, and he resolved to punish his enemy. So, armed with dagger only, he accepted the gage, and insisted on the Red-Haired's right to demand it. That unfortunate would now have shrunk from the conflict; he had counted on his comrades' interposition. But as they, one and all, noted his dastard bearing, the right was accorded, and the conflict recommenced. I need not detail how St. George, after sorely wounding his antagonist, disarmed him. The defeated knight rolled at his feet in dying agonies, and St. George gloomily surveyed him, with a relenting severity in his eye. But he became hard as iron, and relentless as Fate, when the name of Malgreda passed the lips of Rodolph; and ere the



and, influenced by what started upon his feet and said, "I have heard of a hero in Europe who save men by the score, but never have I seen him!" "There are many things thou hast not seen!" St. George replied, with scornful assurance, "for example, thou hast not seen the knight who would sleep at his side as his footboy!" "This to me!" cried Rodolph; "by all I hold sacred, I will reckon with thee anon!" "Thou swearest," St. George responded, "by thine own coward self; but, as thou desirest it, I will talk to some of mine's point on the morrow. Thou hast given the lie to my story; I will offer thee to the gods as its moral!" So it was ordered that St. George and the Red-Haired should try their prowess next day; and with that the quarrel seemed to terminate, and the brimming cup went round, and the knights made merry until the evening shades prevailed.

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recreant expired (absolved on the holy relic which St. George bore) he disclosed sufficient to establish a complicity between Malgreda, Icalon, and himself. His agonies, however, were such as to confuse his confession, and St. George could only glean such facts as these:—That, in an hour of temptation, Rodolph had joined himself to the sorcerer and the Seven-Fingered; that Malgreda's daughter had been carried off to her father's stronghold in the mountains, where she was held captive at the time. And as the Red-Haired breathed his guilty spirit away, our hero, awakening to the importance of immediate action, took leave of the knights, and departed.

CHAPTER IX.

Adventures—The Impish Attendant of Icalon—St. George Encounters the Seven-Fingered—The Conflict—Death of Icalon—St. George's Vengeance on the Dwarf—The Prototype of Mazeppa—Terrible Approach to Malgreda's Stronghold—Dangers of the Path.

COMING to a place where cross-roads met, St. George, dismounting, elevated his lance to the zenith, and let it fall. Then, following the way it pointed, he in due time arrived at a fountain of crystal clearness, whose waters flashed in the sun, and reflected his mail as he bent over them. Around the marble basin were these words:—"The knight who drinketh of this pure element may fitly bless the giver!" St. George drank long and gratefully; and as he raised his head a new ardour seemed to possess him. "O unknown benefactor!" he cried, "the friend of him who knows thee not, accept the tribute of a thankful heart at this thy shrine! The gift is doubly precious, because thou benefitest him who can never return thy favour." And filling his saddlehorn, he ministered unto his good steed, and departed with a prayer for the repose of the donor's soul, if dead he were.

As he rode on, the path grew tangled with weeds, and many a glittering snake glided past in alarm. The air became thick and hot, and vapours exhaled from the parched underwood, and darkness gathered about him. From covert and den, almost obscured, he heard the cries of wild animals, and swooping carrion-birds shrieked dismally. The gloom increased, and it was as though the shades of night had fallen. His path narrowed, until the faithful horse he bestrode could scarcely proceed. Then, suddenly entering a forest, he descended into a delicious dell, fragrant with the scents of flowers, and resounding with the sweet notes of bright-plumaged birds, who sang from the branches above. Here all was light and gay; the sunbeams gilding the rich verdure, and flooding the distant hills with ambery radiance. If before he had traversed the purgatorial depths, he was now in an Elysium. Presently St. George emerged from the dell, and rode into an open country. A league before him shone the sun-lit turrets of a strong castle, built on the mountain-top, and looking towards the Orient. St. George spurred by a clump of trees, whose gnarled trunks and fantastically-twisted boughs suggested

fiends in strife ; and, as his horse reared and uttered a cry of terror, he observed the deformed dwarf attentively regarding him with malicious eyes. But another figure engrossed the knight. He beheld the gigantic Icalon advancing towards him at full speed, his sable armour gleaming as he came on, and his long lance levelled. Couching his own, St. George struck spur, and, with steady arm, directed his point at the knight's broad chest. Icalon, swerving in his saddle, passed unharmed beyond him, and, wheeling, returned to the charge. This time St. George aimed at his visor, but, dexterously avoiding the thrust, the Seven-Fingered pierced our hero's shield, and carried away a part at his spear's point. Again, while the dwarf laughed aloud and stamped his misshapen feet with unholy rapture, they met midway. Alas for Icalon ! the lance of St. George, quivering to its stock, but bravely sustaining the encounter, struck his enemy full in the shoulder, and passed through a cubit's length or more, unhorsing and prostrating him on the plain. Leaping from saddle, St. George unsheathed his sword, and cried, " Now, yield thee, recreant, to thy conqueror ! "

He spake to one who heard him not : Icalon was dead. St. George assured himself of this ; then, taking the bridle of the tenantless horse, galloped towards the affrighted dwarf, who would have fled. But our knight seized that crooked wretch by the nape, and, with a grasp confirmatory of his intentions, proceeded to lash him to the tail of Icalon's horse, using its dis-severed bridle for that purpose. " Now, devil or dwarf ! " he said, " thou shalt be my messenger to him who loves thee ! To Malgredda commend thy captor knight, and tell him, if thou diest not by the way, his sworn foe will greet him anon ! "

Smiting the animal's flank with his sword-hilt, it sped like the wind ; and as the dwarf's afflicted yells became fainter in the distance, St. George returned to the body of his late master. With a great blow he separated its neck ; then, elevating the grim head of Icalon on his own spear, planted it in the earth, and rode away. A parchment which our hero had found within the fallen knight's hauberk instructed him whither to proceed ; and, vowing speedy vengeance on the sorcerer, he galloped past the gnarled trunks, and made for a far-off mountain. There, changing his course, St. George directed his horse towards the setting sun, and beneath a spreading chesnut halted. Here he scrutinized the parchment, and, presently remounting, entered a wild pass, from whose overhanging rocks the mountain springs dripped ceaselessly. By-and-by he alighted, and, with a good hold of his horse's rein, led him down a declivity whose base was dark and terrible. Cautiously treading an

uneven path, the besetting crags frowning above him, St. George forded a stream and arrived before a great block of granite. This, touched with his talisman, slowly moved from its place, disclosing a gulf of no great depth. Our hero, encouraging his steed, which at first seemed restive, but was soothed into compliance, leaped down, and the horse after him. They passed through an arched vault, and were presently on a broad highway. Here St. George mounted and rode on. For a while no obstacle appeared ; but, as he gained a point where the road opened into a broad plain, a monstrous beast disputed the path, with lowered horns and bristling hair. Our hero had never encountered a more formidable enemy, save the great dragon ; but instantly, with lance in rest, he charged the monster, and pierced it to the brain. A few paces brought him to a stone pile, which, entering, he perceived was the lodge of an enormous stronghold, whose massive gates stood full before him. With uplifted eyes, he said, "Now, Heaven assist the right! Malgreda, I come to prove thy boasted power !"

CHAPTER X. AND LAST.

The Fortress in the Moonlight — The Casement — His Advance — Anasie — The Alarm — The Obstacles — Malgrede — The Talisman — The General Dissolution — Anasie's Tears — Revelations — Their Departure.

IN vain with heavy blows he assailed the gate, which refused further progress. But no sooner did St. George touch, with his talisman, its iron-studded face, than, swinging heavily inwards, the path was free. Securing his steed outside, he mounted a winding stair, and found himself in a noble corridor. As he debated which way to proceed, a voice, whose sadness was apparent, met his ear; and, darting swiftly onward, he ascended another and higher flight of oaken steps, which brought him out upon the first leads of the fortress. And the moon flooded all around with her gentle light, bringing forth angle and turret in silver prominence, while the recesses of the castellated summit deepened by very contrast. But it was not the loving influences of the moon that absorbed our knight. A casement, opened to the evening's balmy breath, arrested his glance; and he beheld the chief object of his search—Anasie—bemoaning her fate, and, with reverential eyes upcast, murmuring such words as had sounded on his ear.

“Anasie!” he cried, “weep no more—thy deliverer is beside thee!”

The damsel started from her kneeling posture, with alarm depicted on her fair face. But as she perceived the knight she momentarily brightened with hope, and responded softly, “Then my dream was true! O yes, Sir Knight—deliver me, I pray thee, from this foul place for evermore!”

As the liberated bird flies from its prison, so Anasie bounded through the window; and then, as though ashamed of her impulsiveness, bent with clasped hands and head downcast. St. George raised her, and whispered, “Fair maiden! be resolute as thou art beautiful. I have dared much in thy cause. Trust to me now, and thou shalt soon be far away!”

She glanced at him for a moment; but in that glance he read his fate and hers. And immediately he led her forth, but as his foot touched the upper stair, a great uproar saluted him, and the clashing of arms was heard. At full speed, and bearing Anasie on his shoulder, our knight recovered the corridor,

but his advance was disputed. A band of grim skeletons confronted him ; their ghastly arms outstretched and holding flaming swords whose points dripped blood. "God and the Right !" he cried ; "give way, ye creations of a sorcerer's arts !"

But they replied only with one prolonged and hollow groan, and stood as before. Then St. George extended the sacred gift he carried, and the figures passed into air, while thunders rolled around and lightnings blazed throughout the corridor. Rushing on with his fair burden, St. George descended the lower staircase and regained his steed. Mounting with Anasie he deemed the adventure at an end ; but as he wound down a declivity, the alarms sounding behind him even louder than at first, a gigantic figure with extended arms crossed his path. The monster wore neither coat of mail nor hauberk ; but a crimson sash was wound about him, and he bore in his right hand a rod of ebony. "Vain knight," he said, sepulchrally, "what doest thou ? Darest thou to oppose me with thy mortal glance ? Knowest thou not I have power to imprison thee in the winds—to enclose thee for all time in polar ice—to chain thee in the earth's bowels, whose ardent heat should torment thee till the crack of doom ? Not with lance and helmet do I subdue thee, but with a stronger power than they."

"Thinkest thou so ?" cried St. George ; "if thou art he whom I look for, thou shouldest beseech, not threaten !"

The giant laughed aloud. "Ere I annihilate thy puny life," he answered, "thou shalt learn my name. Behold in me one who has powers which fools revile and wise men respect ; one who controls the ends of life and death, whose strength can only fail before a strength which thou hast not. Sir Knight ! in me behold MALGREDA !"

"And in me thine executioner !" replied St. George, as he extended his talisman.

The discomfited sorcerer threw up his great arms, and, as his ebon wand dropped from his fingers, with a wild cry of horror and defeat fell heavily to the earth, and expired.

"Thus perish those," our hero said, "who dare to doubt the omnipotence of Heaven !" And putting spurs to his horse he rode on. As he gained the mountain's base, a thousand thunders shook it, and turning his head he beheld the distant stronghold of the dead sorcerer shaken as by an earthquake. As he gazed, its walls, its turrets, bastions, all disappeared from his sight in a great abyss which opened to receive them. And the thunders ceased to roll, the fire of heaven to flash, and a dead silence prevailed.



Anasie wept. "Why art thou distressed?" her knight asked, with momentary displeasure.

"O my lord!" she murmured, while her tears fell fast as rain, "MALGREDA was a bad, bad man; my enemy and the hater of all; but still my sire!"

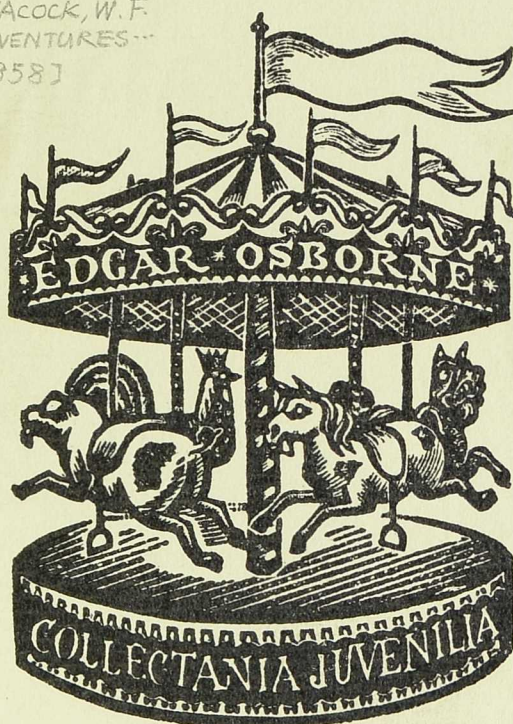
"Not so, my Anasie! Malgredda took thy mother to wife, and thou wert born to her; but thou wert born ere she beheld him, and thy sire was Roderick, my old friend!"

Then he repeated to her the story of her murdered parent's presence, and as she listened the tears of Anasie ceased to fall.

And the brave St. George bore her away to a distant land, where the memory of his gallant deeds is still preserved.

THE END.

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PEACOCK, W. F.
ADVENTURES...
[1858]



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III

