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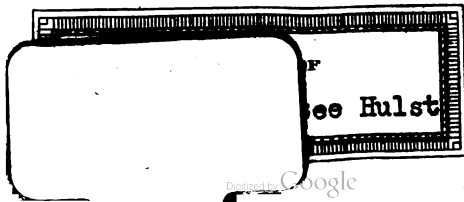
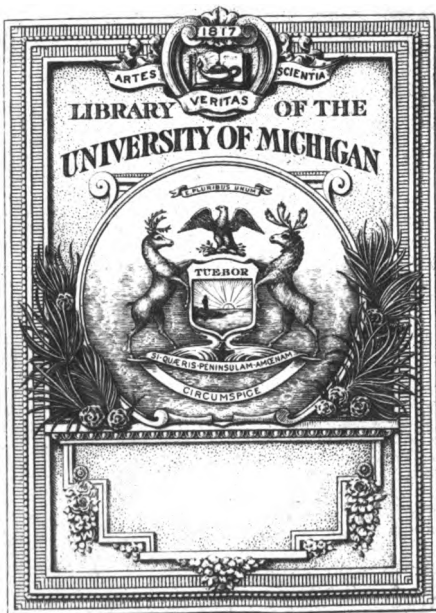
The Life of St. George,

Martyr,

Patron of England.

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Cornelia Stekel Hulest.

Nov. 12, 1965.

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**THE LIFE OF
SAINT GEORGE, MARTYR,
PATRON OF ENGLAND.**

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OF
SAINT GEORGE, MARTYR,
PATRON OF ENGLAND.

BY THE
William
REVEREND DEAN FLEMING (M.R.)

LONDON : R. & T. WASHBOURNE,
18 PATERNOSTER ROW.
BENZIGER BROS., NEW YORK, CINCINNATI & CHICAGO.
1901.

Nihil Obstat.

GULIELMUS CANONICUS GILDEA, D.D.,

Censor deputatus.

Imprimatur.

✠ HERBERTUS CARDINALIS VAUGHAN,

Archiepiscopus Westmonast.

96.
Cornelia Stebbins Thurst
4-17-1915

THE LIFE OF ST. GEORGE,
MARTYR.

The Apocryphal Life of Saint George.

THE life of Saint George, the Martyr, Patron of England, written by Simeon Metaphrastes, and accepted as trustworthy by many critics, has been much, though unjustly, discredited owing to the condemnation of a fictitious life of the Saint, by a Council assembled by Pope Gelasius, in the year 492, soon after his elevation to the Papacy.

The attempted corruption of the



Holy Scriptures, and of the Lives of the Saints, by Arians and infidels, occasioned the assembling of the Council in question. In one of the Canons the lives of the Saints, Quiriacus, Julitta, and George, greatly suspected of having been written either by Arians or infidels, were condemned as apocryphal. As the three saints mentioned then and ever since have held an honoured place in the Roman Martyrology, it is evident that only certain biographies of the saints, and not the saints themselves, fell under the condemnation. That the saints themselves were not condemned is sufficiently evident from the Canon, which is as follows: ‘Gesta Sanctorum Martyrum, qui multiplicibus tormentorum cruciatibus, et mirabilibus con-

fessionum triumphis irradiant, quis ita esse Catholicorum dubitet, et majora eos in agonibus esse perpessos, nec suis viribus, sed Dei gratia et adjutorio universa tolerasset. Sed ideo, secundum consuetudinem antiquam, singulari cautela, in Sancta Romana Ecclesia non leguntur, et ab infidelibus idiotis sed superflue vel minus apte quam rei ordo fuerit, scripta esse putantur, sicut cujusdem Quiriaci et Julittæ matris ejus, sicut Georgii et aliorum passionis hujus modi, qui ab hereticis perhibentur conscriptæ: propter quod, ut dictum est, ne vel levius subsannandi occasio oriretur, in Sancta Romana Ecclesia non leguntur. Nos autem cum predicta Ecclesia, omnes martyres atque eorum gloriosos agones, qui Deo magis quam hominibus noti

sunt, cum omni devotione veneramur.' ('The acts of the holy Martyrs are made illustrious by numerous sufferings, and the wonderful triumphs of their confessions of faith. Who is there amongst Catholics that would doubt that they endured all their sufferings, more by the aid of God's grace than by their own strength? Therefore, according to the ancient custom, their lives which are pronounced to have been either written by men, of whose names we are ignorant; or to have been exaggerated, or more unbecomingly treated than the occasion requires, by foolish infidels; the Holy Roman Church, with singular caution, never reads them. For example, the passions of Quiriacus and his mother Julitta, and of St. George, and of

others which have evidently been written by heretics, on that account that they may be no more the occasion of contempt and ridicule, we decree, that it is unlawful to read them in the Holy Roman Church. We, however, together with the aforesaid Church venerate with all devotion all the martyrs and their glorious sufferings, which are better known to God than to men.’)

The warning is repeated in the Sixth Council of Constantinople, A.D. 680, in the following words:—

‘ This Holy Synod doth ordain that these false martyrologies, which have been written by the enemies of our religion, be no more published in the churches, but consigned to the flames as dangerous writings, which disgrace

the Saints of God, and lead men either to infidelity or incredulity. And for those, who either entertain them or hold them to be true, let them be anathema.'

Any one, on carefully reading the condemnation of the apocryphal life of St. George, written by an anonymous and heretical writer, will have no difficulty in perceiving that that condemnation does not affect any genuine life of the saint, written either before or afterwards. It is very probable, as Heylyn suggests (*Life of St. George*, p. 1, cap. 2), that the writer of the apocryphal life mixed up the life of our saint with that of George, the Arian Bishop of Alexandria.

*The Author of St. George's Life, Simeon
Metaphrastes.*

Cardinal Bellarmine informs us that Simeon Metaphrastes flourished about the middle of the ninth century. The name Metaphrastes was given him because of the wonderful industry and care with which he collected together and published the old lives of saints and martyrs; and, whilst retaining the sense and matter of the original writers, rendered their histories more readable by reproducing them in his own graceful and elegant style.

This work of Metaphrastes, when published, was very favourably received in all the churches, as Lippomanus, Bishop of Verona, and a friend of Bellarmine, testifies. The great

merit of the writer received the lavish praises of Michael Pfellus (apud Surium, November 17th), who, in his famous panegyric, used these words: 'When I resolved on giving a tribute of praise to the great Simeon, whose name and works are celebrated throughout the world, I was quite at a loss in selecting words to express my thoughts.'

The Bishops assembled at the Council of Florence, 1436, quoted his name and authority for the great point under discussion—'Filioque.' He is thus mentioned in the seventh session: 'In primis ergo Simeon Metaphrastes vestris in ecclesiis celeberrimus accedat.' ('Simeon Metaphrastes, a man most celebrated in your churches, comes next,' &c.)

Theodore Balsamon, in his commentaries on the canons made in Trullo, when treating of the 63rd Canon, where the Council deploras the hideous manner in which the lives of the saints and martyrs had been falsified by heretics, took occasion to refer to the lives of the saints published by Simeon Metaphrastes, in these words: 'All praise be unto blessed Metaphrastes, who with such infinite pains and labour hath published the glorious sufferings of the martyrs for the holy truth.' It is true, certainly, that he has been blamed by Baronius for mingling some fables with his history, but, as Bellarmine explains, the great historian is probably referring to some additions to Metaphrastes' work, added by others

long after his death. Others again, like Harding, confuse the genuine writings of Simeon Metaphrastes, who flourished in the ninth century, with those of Simeon of Constantinople, a man of mean repute, who lived in 1306. It is probable that the latter Simeon may have written some additions to Metaphrastes' works, but this cannot refer to the Life of St. George, admittedly written by Metaphrastes himself.

*Life of St. George, Martyr, by Simeon
Metaphrastes.*

St. George, the Martyr, was born in the year 269, at Cappadocia, of noble and Christian parents, by whom he was brought up in the fear and love of God. Soon after his childhood he

lost his father, who died fighting bravely against the enemies of Christ. After his father's death he went with his mother to Palestine, of which country his mother was a native, and where a large fortune and a rich inheritance awaited him.

Distinguished by his birth, education, and physical advantages, he was readily admitted into the Roman army, where he soon obtained the rank of a Tribune. As a soldier he gave so many proofs of his valour and military skill that Diocletian, not knowing that he was a Christian, advanced him in a high place of dignity in the Imperial Court, then held at Nicomedia. Soon after this St. George lost his good mother, who died just as he had completed his twentieth year. Although

still young in years, he was old in wisdom, proficient in the use of arms from his childhood, and renowned in all the battles in which he had been engaged.

Before dealing with the relentless persecution inaugurated by the Emperor Diocletian soon after George had become a courtier in attendance, it may be well to consider the circumstances of the Roman Empire at this period.

Diocletian, on the death of Carus, had been proclaimed Emperor. Realising that the burden of ruling so vast an empire was too great for one man to bear, he associated with himself in the Imperial title and power, Maximian, one of his favourite soldiers, creating him Emperor of the western

portion of the Empire, then threatened by the barbarians of the North and West; while he reserved for himself the Eastern Provinces, which were then being devastated by the Persians. A little later the two Emperors decided to appoint two Cæsars or successors. Diocletian nominated Galerius Maximianus, while Maximinian nominated Constantius Chlorus. On Galerius and Constantius the active work of the Empire devolved.

Eusebius, in his life of Constantine the Great (bk. 2, cap. 48) tells us what occasioned the persecution, which soon after commenced. It seems that when Diocletian became Emperor, the Oracle of Apollo complained that he could no longer foretell the future on account of the generation of the just. When the

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Emperor asked who were those just men of whom Apollo made complaint, the soothsayer replied that they were the Christians. From this time Diocletian both hated and feared the Christians. When freed from the more serious cares of the Empire by the appointment of Galerius, Diocletian resolved to let the Christians feel the full weight of his anger. He published an edict, threatening death to all who should not at once abandon the Christian faith within his province, and requested the Senate to approve of the extension of this edict to the whole Roman Empire—east and west. George of Cappadocia, devoted to the faith, and unable to endure this intolerable tyranny, indignantly tore down the edict. Foreseeing the con-

sequences of the open confession of faith he now decided to make, he divested himself of his military uniform, and, having divided his wealth among the poor, fearlessly presented himself before the Senate, which, in the presence of the Emperor, was about to lend its sanction to the Imperial decree. Addressing himself to Diocletian and to the Senate, he spoke as follows: 'How long, most noble Emperor, and you, Conscript Fathers, will you continue to increase your tyrannies against Christians? How long will you persevere in enacting cruel and unjust laws against them, endeavouring to compel those who are properly instructed in the true faith to follow a religion of the truth of which you yourselves are doubtful?

Your idols are not gods; I repeat it, they are not! Be no longer deceived by your errors. Our Christ alone is God. He alone is Lord, in the glory of the Father. Either acknowledge that religion which is true, or, at least, disturb not by your furious folly those who would willingly embrace it.'

Overcome with amazement at the Saint's manly and outspoken courage, the senators remained silent. After some moments the Emperor called on Magnentius, the Consul, a favourite of his, who was present, to make a suitable answer. Magnentius commanded George to stand before him, and then inquired: 'What made you so bold and so uncontrolled in your speech?' George answered at once, 'The truth.'

‘What is the truth?’ was the next question. The reply promptly came: ‘Christ Jesus, Whose servant I am. Confiding in my Master, I have ventured, in testimony of His Gospel, to come into this assembly.’

The Emperor, who was unwilling to lose a man of such sterling worth as George, now interposed with a promise of not only pardon, but promotion, if the Saint would only renounce Christianity, and, at the same time, threatening torments and death if St. George obstinately adhered to his profession of the Christian faith.

But George, inspired by God to show the Emperor the folly of worshipping idols, said to Diocletian: ‘Let us go into the temple, to see the gods whom you worship.’ Thinking that the

Saint had been influenced by his words, and was now ready to abandon the faith he had, a moment before, so nobly professed. Diocletian accompanied the destined martyr to the temple. On arriving there, George, arming himself with the sign of the cross, walked straight up to the statue of Apollo, and said: 'Shall I sacrifice to you as to God?' The idol answered, 'No.' St. George then commanded the evil spirit to quit the statue, and forthwith the image fell to pieces.

This proof of the supreme power of the true God, whom the Christians worshipped, instead of convincing the Emperor of the folly of idolatry, served only to exasperate him the more. He ordered that George, manacled and laden with chains, should be im-

prisoned for that night with a heavy weight on his chest.

Questioned by Diocletian, on the following day, as to whether he still persisted in believing in Christ, St. George resolutely answered: 'You will sooner grow tired of tormenting me, than I of enduring your tortures.' Despairing now of shaking his constancy either by promises or threats, they put him on a wheel, barbed with sharp knives; but though his body was covered with wounds, he endured his torments with Christian fortitude. Many, who were present at the time, declared afterwards that they saw a man, clad in white, comforting the martyr during his agony.

He was next placed, for three continuous days, close to the burning heat

in a lime kiln, after which they forced him to wear a pair of iron shoes heated, and with the nails turned inwards. They next scourged and buffeted him before leading him back to his prison cell.

On the following day, after being sentenced to death, he was permitted to see his trusted servant, Pascicrates, who afterwards left a manuscript in Greek, recording the sufferings of his master, a copy of which is preserved in the University of Oxford. St. George earnestly besought Pascicrates to procure that, after the execution, his remains should be interred in Lydda in Palestine, where he had formerly dwelt with his mother.

The martyr was beheaded in the Imperial city of Nicomedia, on Good

Friday, April 23rd, in the year 290, when he had just reached the twenty-first year of his age. Pascicrates faithfully carried out the martyr's wishes, and reverently buried his remains at Lydda, where the Feast of his Martyrdom was afterwards celebrated.

The celebration of this feast gave rise, subsequently, to the erroneous impression, entertained by many writers, that St. George was martyred in Lydda. Any one, however, who carefully studies the Martyrologies will find that the 'passions' of the martyrs are more frequently celebrated in the places where their remains were laid, than in the places of their martyrdom. Thus, St. Amphibalus was martyred at Redburn, but his feast is celebrated at St. Albans. St. Fremund was



martyred at Hesaage in the Welch Marches, but his feast is celebrated at Offchurch, Warwickshire, where his relics were carried; while St. Ethelred, although martyred at Merton, in Surrey, is commemorated at Wimbourne, in Dorsetshire, the place of his burial.

Lydda, where St. George was buried, is described by some biographers of the saint as being in Persia. The difficulty thus created is apparent only. The truth is that Palestine, in St. George's day, was included in the kingdom of Persia.

There can be no reasonable doubt that the martyrdom of St. George took place at Nicomedia, which was then the seat of the Imperial Government; whereas Lydda was only an obscure

town in Palestine, which was never honoured by the Imperial presence.

Many people were converted to Christianity by witnessing the noble constancy and fortitude with which this glorious martyr shed his blood for the Christian faith. Amongst these were two noblemen, mentioned in the Greek menologies, who afterwards shed their blood for the faith.

*Eusebius confirms Metaphrastes' History
of St. George.*

Eusebius, in his Ecclesiastical History (bk. 8, cap. 4-7), makes mention of Seleucus and Julian, who suffered martyrdom in Cappadocia during Diocletian's persecution. 'Many,' he declares, 'willingly surrendered honour-

able offices, and some their lives, when the persecution first broke out in Nicomedia.' We are informed, too, that Dorotheus and Gregonius, of Cæsar's household, suffered death. The name of George, indeed, is not mentioned; but Eusebius distinctly states that it would be too long and tedious for him to recount the names of all the martyrs, or the particular torments they suffered. He, however, fully admits that Cappadocia had its martyrs, that the persecution raged at Nicomedia, and that it extended to the army, and even to the courtiers at the palace. Although Eusebius does not name St. George, it is easy to identify him as the anonymous man of 'no common rank,' described in the fifth chapter of the eighth book of the

Ecclesiastical History. I give Eusebius's own words:—

‘No sooner was the edict made against the Church exposed in Nicomedia, than presently one of no common rank, but very highly advanced in fortune and in worldly honours, moved by zeal for God and a lively faith, tore it to pieces as profane and impious in the very place where it was openly posted. And this he did whilst two of the Emperors were present in the city, viz., Diocletian, who was the first, and Galerius Maximus, who was the fourth in rank amongst them.’

Without mentioning the martyr's name, Eusebius continues: ‘He was the first who was ennobled for his sufferings at the time, on whom no

doubt there was inflicted whatever punishment might be thought answerable to the fact, which he endured with the most quiet and untroubled mind, and so continued to the end.'

Eusebius practically acknowledges that he has not ascertained the name of the first and most distinguished martyr who suffered at Nicomedia, but he otherwise fully describes the saint. The circumstances of time, place, rank, and the fact that Eusebius's anonymous martyr 'of no common rank, but very highly advanced in fortune and in worldly honours,' was the first who suffered at Nicomedia, identify him as St. George beyond reasonable doubt.

The Testimony of St. Ambrose.

St. Ambrose, in his 'Liber Præfationum,' bears noble testimony to St. George. Although the book itself is lost, as Erasmus sorrowfully acknowledges, the part that refers to St. George still survives in Herman Schedal's 'Chronica Chronicorum,' from which we quote the following: 'George, the faithful soldier of Jesus Christ, when religion was everywhere concealed by the Christian inhabitants, he alone confessed Christ to be the Son of God. The grace of God imparted to him such constancy that he scorned the threats of the tyrannical ruler, and feared not the agony of innumerable torments.'



*St. Bede's Testimony of St. George
explained.*

St. Bede, in his Martyrology, testifies to the martyrdom of St. George :

‘ April 23rd is the Feast of the Passion of St. George the Martyr, who suffered under Dacianus, the most potent king of the Persians, and lord of no less than seventy tributary princes. Illustrious for many miracles, he converted many to the Christian faith, amongst whom was Alexandria, the wife of Dacianus himself, and remained constant in the faith until death. He completed his martyrdom by being beheaded, although the history of his passion is numbered amongst the apocryphal writings.’

No Roman Emperor ever existed of

the name of Dacianus, and no Persian king can be discovered of that name. Galerius, however, is often called Dacianus, simply because he was a Dacian by birth. As he conquered the Persians, made their king, Narses, a captive, and took over the government of that vast kingdom, which certainly numbered seventy tributary princes, Galerius the Dacian was, practically speaking, 'the most potent king of the Persians.' This explanation may, perhaps, help to elucidate the reference to Dacianus in St. Bede's Martyrology.

*The Martyrology of Usuardus and
St. George.*

Usuardus was one of the pupils of the famous Alcuin. At the request of

Charlemagne, he composed a Martyrology about the year 812. This was justly celebrated and used in many churches during his own day, and after. He thus writes of the Martyrdom of St. George:—‘On the ninth of the calends of May (April 23rd) the death and passion of St. George the Martyr, that glorious leader, but more famous by his miracles, is celebrated at Diopolis, a town in Persia. The story of his passion, though reckoned as apocryphal, does not prejudice the truth and glory of his martyrdom, so celebrated in the Church.’ As already explained, Diopolis or Lydda, and all Palestine, were included in the kingdom of Persia when St. George was there interred.

*Testimony of Rabanus, Archbishop of
Mentz.*

Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mentz, whom Bellarmine describes as a man equally learned and good ('æque doctus et pius') who lived about the year 835, gives a description of St. George similar to that of St. Bede, but concludes by saying, 'cujus vitam et passionem legi' ('whose life and martyrdom I have read'); but he does not mention the author's name. It serves to show, however, that besides the account of St. George's life and sufferings, left by his faithful servant, and still extant, Simeon Metaphrastes could command materials sufficient to compose a genuine history of St. George, when he completed his Lives of the Saints about the year 850.

*Testimony of Vincentius, Bishop of
Beauvais.*

This good Bishop was a man of so great a reputation for deep learning that he was thought by some, in the beginning, to be the author of St. Thomas's *Prima Primæ* and *Secunda Secundæ*, until the true writer was discovered. Vincentius, in the twelfth book of his *Speculum Historiale* (cap. 128) gives the following account of St. George:—'During the persecution of the President, Dacianus, came George, a Cappadocian soldier, to Court. On witnessing the terrible state of the Christians, he divided his wealth among the poor: putting on the Christian dress, and taking off his military uniform, he proclaimed himself a fol-

lower of Christ. In the midst of the idolators he cried out that all the gods of the gentiles were but devils, and that the Lord alone made the heavens. The President addressing him asked : " What is your rank that you should presume to say that our gods are devils? Tell us where dost thou come from and what is thy name? " He replied : " My name is George, I am a Christian, a native of Cappadocia, and a soldier by profession, but I have abandoned everything in order that I might devote all my services to the God of heaven." "

Vincentius then goes on to enumerate the several torments to which the martyr was subjected : he was tortured on the rack, burnt with firebrands, put on the wheel barbed with keen swords,



put into a vessel filled with molten lead, and finally beheaded.' 'He suffered at Diopolis [another name for Lydda] in the city of the Persians upon April 23rd.' As no one can for a moment imagine that a man, so learned as Vincentius, would quote from the apocryphal history condemned by Pope Gelasius; we must conclude, then, that there was some genuine history, or histories, of St. George, like that of Simeon Metaphrastes, then in existence.

*Hermanus Schedal's Biography of St.
George.*

Schedal, a doctor of the University of Padua, and author of the *Chronica Chronicorum*, which was published in the year 1493. His evidence is this:—

‘George, of Cappadocia, a Tribune, and a famous soldier of Jesus Christ, suffered about this time. Coming from Cappadocia to Diopolis [Lydda], a city of the Persians, like another Roman Curtius, and like Cedrus, king of Athens, who delivered themselves to death for their country, he offered himself a victim in order to slay the dragon. After killing the dragon he was stretched upon the rack, his body was lacerated with wounds, his bowels were torn out, with divers other torments, until at last he finished his life by being decapitated.’

Metaphrastes, in his anniversary oration on the Feast of St. George's Martyrdom, uses the same metaphor. After dwelling on the snares laid for the martyr, he enumerates amongst

them, 'the kingdom of this world and its glory, the frowns of an angry emperor, and the terrors of torture and death.' He concludes by saying that 'it was consoling to see this most astute dragon, who used to boast of his triumphs over mankind, rejoicing in his victories, successfully eluded by a young man in the flower of his youth, and so despised and shamed that he was utterly astounded.'

The Legend of St. George and the Dragon.

Hospinian (*Lib. de Festis*) mentions that the constancy of St. George, panegyrised by Simeon Metaphrastes, gave full scope to the inventive genius of Jacobus de Voragine, an author who flourished about 1280. Jacobus

de Voragine relates that St. George, when a Tribune, visited once the city of Sylena, in Libya. Near to the town was a lake so large that it resembled a sea. In it a dreadful dragon had taken up its abode. Towards evening the monster was wont to come close to the walls of the city, terrifying all the inhabitants, and infecting the whole neighbourhood with his pestiferous breath. To bribe him to keep at a distance, the inhabitants supplied him with two sheep every day. When all the sheep were nearly devoured, they were forced to give him one sheep and one man or woman, chosen by lot, in order to make up the two victims. At last, when nearly all their sons and daughters were devoured, the cruel and unfortunate lot of being the next



victim fell on the king's daughter, her father's only child. The king and queen used all their endeavours to avert this calamity, but nothing less than the sacrifice of the princess would satisfy their subjects, whose own children had already been devoured by this terrible dragon. They brought her forth into the fields, and were on the point of casting her to the monster when George, the Roman Tribune, appeared upon the scene prepared to fight the dragon.

Long and terrible was the combat that followed between the noble knight and the monster, but victory fell to the Christian soldier, the dragon was slain, and the princess restored in safety to her parents.

The legend concludes with the con-

version of the royal family to Christianity, and with the departure of the knight, who, before leaving, commended the king and people to God's care and protection.

This story, as Heylyn observes, is, in almost all the particulars, excepting the marriage of the princess with the knight, a reproduction of Ovid's Perseus and Andromeda.

*Andromeda rescued by Perseus from the
Sea Monster.*

Ovid's 'Metamorphoses.'—Book iv.

Now Æolus has with strong chains
confined,
And deep imprisoned every blustering
wind.
The rising Phosphor with a purple
light,



Did sluggish mortals to new toils
invite.

His feet again valiant Perseus plumes,
And his keen sabre in his hand resumes.
Then nobly spurns the ground, and
upwards springs,
And cuts the liquid air with sounding
wings.

O'er various seas and various lands he
pass'd,
Till Ethiopia's shore appear'd at last.
Andromeda was there, doom'd to atone
By her own ruin follies not her own :
And if injustice in a god can be,
Such was the Libyan god's unjust
decree.

Chain'd to a rock she stood ; young
Perseus stay'd
His rapid flight to view the beautiful
maid.

So sweet her frame, so exquisitely fine,
She seem'd a statue by a hand divine,
Had not the wind her waving tresses
show'd,
And down her cheeks the melting
sorrows flow'd.

* * *

The admirer almost had forgot to fly,
And swift descended, fluttering from
on high.
'Thy country and thy name,' he said,
'disclose,
And give a true rehearsal of thy woes.'
A quick reply her bashfulness refused,
To the free converse of a man unused.
Her rising blushes had concealment
found
From her spread hands, but that her
hands were bound :
She acted to her full extent of power,

And bathed her face with a fresh,
silent shower.

But, by degrees, in innocence grown
bold,

Her name, her country, and her birth
she told ;

And how she suffered for her mother's
pride,

Who with the Nereids once in beauty
vied.

Part yet untold, the seas began to
roar,

And mounting billows tumbled to the
shore.

Above the waves a monster raised his
head,

His body o'er the deep was widely
spread.

Onward he flounced ; aloud the virgin
cries,

Each parent to her shrieks in shrieks
replies ;

But she had deepest cause to rend the
skies.

Weeping, to her they cling ; no sign
appears

Of help, they only lend their helpless
tears.

‘ Too long you vent your sorrows,’
Perseus said ;

‘ Short is the hour, and swift the time
of aid :

In me, the son of thundering Jove
behold,

Got in a kindly shower of fruitful
gold :

Medusa’s snaky head is now my prey ;
And through the clouds I boldly wing
my way.

If such desert be worthy of esteem,

And if your daughter I from death
redeem,
Shall she be mine? Shall it not be
thought
A bride so lovely was too cheaply
bought?'

* * *

The parents eagerly the terms embrace,
For who would slight such terms in
such a case?
Nor her alone they promise, but,
beside,
The dowry of a kingdom with the
bride.
As well-rigged galleys, which slaves,
sweating, row,
With their sharp beaks the whiten'd
ocean plough,
So, when the monster moved, still at
his back

The furrow'd waters left a foamy
track.

Now to the rock he was advanced so
nigh,

Whirl'd from a sling a stone the space
would fly.

Then, bounding upwards, the brave
Perseus sprung,

And in mid air on hovering pinions
hung.

His shadow quickly floated on the
main ;

The monster could not his wild rage
restrain,

But at the floating shadow leap'd in
vain.

As when Jove's bird a speckled serpent
spies,

Which in the shine of Phœbus basking
lies,

Unseen, he souses down, and bears
away,
Truss'd from behind, the vainly hissing
prey,
To writhe his neck the labour naught
avails,
Too deep the imperial talons pierce his
scales :
Thus the wing'd hero now descends,
now soars,
And at his pleasure the vast monster
gores.
Full in his back, swift stooping from
above,
The crooked sabre to its hilt he
drove.
The monster raged, impatient of the
pain,
First bounded high, and then sank
low again.

Now, like a savage boar, when chafed
with wounds,
And bay'd with opening mouths of
hungry hounds,
He on the foe turns with collected
might,
Who still eludes him with an airy
flight !
And, wheeling round, the scaly armour
tries
Of his thick sides, his thinner tail now
plies ;
Till, from repeated strokes, out gushed
a flood,
And the waves redden'd with the
streaming blood.
At last the drooping wings, befoam'd
all over,
With flaggy heaviness their master
bore.

A rock he spied, whose humble head
was low,

Bare at an ebb, but covered at a
flow.

A ridgy hold he, thither flying,
gained,

And with one hand his bending weight
sustained ;

With the other, vigorous blows he
dealt around,

And the home thrusts the expiring
monster own'd.

In deaf'ning shouts the glad applauses
rise,

And peal on peal runs rattling through
the skies.

The saviour youth the royal pair con-
fess,

And with heaved hands their daughter's
bridegroom bless.

The beauteous bride moves on, now
loosed from chains,
The cause and sweet reward of all the
hero's pains.

(*Ovid*. Translated by Dryden, Pope, Congreve,
and Addison. Edition 1833. Valpy, London.)

The Greek Church and St. George.

The Greek Anthologion, April 23rd,
commemorates St. George as follows:—

‘On April 23rd is celebrated the memorial of the most holy, celebrated, and honourable George, commonly called Tropæophorus. This famous and wonderful martyr lived during the reign of the Emperor Diocletian. A Cappadocian by birth, and of noble parentage, he was a Tribune of the soldiers, and afterwards advanced to the

dignity of a courtier in the Emperor's palace. When the Emperor began to persecute the Church, St. George advanced into the royal presence,' &c.

The Greek Menology and St. George.

The Greek Menology of April 23rd contains precisely the same biography of the Saint as the Anthologion; but, on November 3rd, it further adds that:— 'The honourable martyr of Jesus Christ, George, lived in the days of Diocletian. His father was a native of Cappadocia, and his mother of Palestine. He was of noble birth: his education godly, and he was of a sweet, and gracious disposition.' It then proceeds to describe his father's death, and his return with his mother

to Palestine; his service as a tribune in the army, and all the circumstances of his sufferings and death, as recorded in the history of St. George's life by Metaphrastes.

The Bishop of Alexandria and St. George.

Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, in his celebrated work, *Fasti Seculi*, published in the year 640, narrates the martyrdom of St. George as follows:—

‘Two hundred and fifty years after Christ's Ascension,’ that is to say in the year of our Lord 289, ‘a great persecution broke out against the Christians, during which many of them, including St. George, suffered martyrdom.’ It is stated by Metaphrastes, that the saint had just completed his twentieth year when he entered the

Imperial service at Court, and that 'soon afterwards' the persecution began. Allowing the margin of a year for the expression 'soon afterwards,' it shows that St. George was born in the year 269, and martyred in the twenty-first year of his age. This harmonises with the notice given of the Saint by Nicephorus Callistus, in his Ecclesiastical History (bk. 7, cap. 15) published in 1305, in which we are told that, when Andronicus the Elder reigned at Constantinople, he made the following statement upon oath:—

'About the time of Diocletian's fury, the so much celebrated St. George, chief of the army of martyrs, received the fruit and recompense of all his sufferings for his Saviour. He was a native of Cappadocia, and being

exceedingly young, and singularly beautiful, with scarcely budding beard, nobly endured the pains of martyrdom. Having been apprehended for denouncing idols, and scoffing at the religion of the Emperors, he suffered such extremity of torture, as was almost above the strength of human nature to endure. After they had imprisoned him, and even cramped his legs with irons, he was first pierced and harrowed, as it were, with the sharpest nails. Afterwards, being scorched with burning lime, stretched on the rack, wounded with swords, and subjected to all manner of revolting torments, he still stood inflexible, and plainly showed his invincible resolution. . . . In the end he was beheaded, and departed this life for a better one.'



*The Testimony of Catacuzanus, Emperor
of Constantinople.*

This Emperor, in the year 1348, published four books which he had written against Mahomet. In one of them he makes mention of St. George in these words :—

‘St. George the Martyr, so much honoured by us Christians, was by the wicked and idolatrous grievously tormented, so that he might be forced to abjure Christ and adore their idols; but he chose to endure innumerable deaths, and tortures, for the sake of Christ, rather than renounce his faith, and for that reason was subjected to a variety of racks and torments. At last he said unto the tyrant, “Come, let us look upon your gods.” When the

tyrant heard this he rejoiced exceedingly, thinking that the saint meant to sacrifice unto their idols. Having arrived at the Temple, accompanied by a great crowd of people, the martyr went up to the altar, and lifting up his voice he said: "Tell me, ye idols, in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the true God?" They answered: "Christ the Son of God, and God the Father." The martyr thereupon said: "I command you in the name of Christ to fall down in my presence," and immediately they all fell to pieces. When the multitude witnessed this, they cried out: "Great is the Christian faith; great is the God of George."



*The Testimony of a Monk named
Damascene.*

Damascene, in his Thesaurus, narrates as follows:—‘About this time’ (Diocletian’s) ‘flourished the honourable martyr George, a young man of about the age of twenty; of noble parentage, and rich, and a native of Cappadocia. His father having died a true Christian, his mother returned to Palestine, her native country, as she had great possessions there.’ He then briefly gives the history of St. George, similar to that of Metaphrastes, and concludes by saying: ‘after many torments, valiantly endured, he was beheaded by the soldiers.’

*Philes the Greek Poet's Verses on
St. George.*

Philes flourished during the time of Michael Palæologus, and wrote the Life of St. George in twenty-two tetrastikes, four of which Heylyn (part 2, cap. 4) rendered into English.

BIRTH OF ST. GEORGE.

Manya star-like martyr hast thou given,
O Cappadocia, to the God of Heaven;
But this bright star, St. George, no
longer thou
Shalt bear: the highest heavens con-
tain him now.

HIS CONDEMNATION.

In our Redeemer's death two kings
agreed,
But four St. George's sufferings have
decreed.



For so the Master's saying did divine,
The faithful shall do greater works
than mine.

HIS IMPRISONMENT.

What arts these tyrants use to lock up
fast
This blessed Saint, lest he should 'scape
at last.
Dull fools, could you imagine he would
fly,
That made the proffer of himself to die?

HIS MARTYRDOM.

Throughout all thy body, great St.
George, thou hast
Suffered for God's dear glory: now at
last
Suffer thy trunkless head His praise to
show,
And end the tyrant's labours with a
blow.

*Harmony of the Different Biographies of
St. George.*

It is quite clear, from the evidence produced, that St. George was a Cappadocian by birth and a soldier by profession, who, by his valour, attained the distinguished rank of Tribune in the Roman Army. It is agreed by all that he suffered in the cruel manner described by Pascirates, Metaphrastes, Cedrinus, Peter (Bishop of Alexandria), Damascene, and Philes. Nicephorus and Schedal bear witness to the same effect. Through a mistake, which has been fully explained, he is represented as having suffered under Dacianus, or, in other words, Galerius the Dacian, by St. Bede, Rabanus Maurus, Notgerous, and Antoninus, simply because

Galerius was, when the martyrdom took place, present with Diocletian in Nicomedia, and sanctioned the action of his patron.

The discrepancies amongst some writers, as to the exact year when the martyrdom took place, are so small as to cause no difficulty. Peter, Bishop of Alexandria, gives 289, Baronius 290, and the author of *Fasciculum Temporum* 291, as the year when St. George suffered for the Faith. All the others quoted are agreed in stating that the Martyr was most cruelly tortured before he was beheaded.

Pascicrates informs us that his master, St. George, before his martyrdom, expressed a strong desire that his remains should be buried at Diopolis or Lydda, which, though in Palestine

proper, was nevertheless a part of the Persian Empire at the time.

These two facts led some historians to suppose that Lydda was actually in Persia proper, and that, as the Feast of the Passion of St. George has ever since been celebrated at Lydda, his martyrdom must have taken place in that city, forgetful of the fact that the 'passions' of the martyrs are generally celebrated in the places which are honoured by their remains, and frequently not in the places where they have shed their blood.

With this necessary explanation it can be truly affirmed that all the writers referred to are practically agreed as to the parentage, place of birth, life, sufferings, and cruel martyrdom of England's great Patron, St. George the Martyr. E

The Relics of St. George.

Gregory, Bishop of Tours, who died in the year 596, wrote seven books on the histories of the holy martyrs. Referring to St. George, he bears testimony to the miracles wrought through his intercession in these words: 'We have known of many miracles wrought through the intercession of St. George, the Martyr,' and, descending to particulars, he states that 'some of the saint's relics are preserved in the village of Lymosin in La Maine,' and gives the following interesting account of how they came there:—

'St. George's relics,' he declares, 'together with those of other saints, were brought by certain men to the frontiers of Lymosin, where a few priests, having

built a small wooden chapel, daily offered up their prayers to God. When arrived the strangers asked for a night's lodging, and were made welcome by the good priests. On the following morning, when they wished to continue their journey, they were unable to lift their knapsacks, which contained the relics of St. George, from the place where they were laid overnight. This seemed to them a clear sign that it was the manifest will of God that they should bestow some of the relics on their hosts, which they accordingly did. Then, all difficulty being removed, they went on their way.'

Aymonius, one of the monks of St. German's monastery, near Paris, and a public notary of the same institution,

left on record, in the year 873, the following facts:—

‘Childebert, son of Clovis, the first Christian king of France, who commenced to reign in the year 515, erected the monastery of St. Vincent’s, near Paris, in 542. This monastery he not only endowed with many estates, but also enriched with the relics of St. Vincent, and St. George, and a portion of the true Cross, all of which he brought from Spain, which he twice visited.’ The charter of the foundation is quoted by Aymonius (*Hist. de Gestis Francorum*, lib. 2, cap. 20). It runs thus: ‘Childebertus Rex Francorum, &c. In honorem Sancti Vincentii Martyris, cujus reliquias de Hispania apportavimus, ac Sancti Stephani, et Sancti Ferreoli, et Sancti Juliani, ceu et Sanctæ

Crucis, et beatissimi Sancti Georgii, et Sancti Gervasii, Protasii et Celsi pueri, quorum reliquias ibi sunt consecratae.' ('Childebert, King of the Franks, &c. This monastery is built by me, in honour of St. Vincent, Martyr, whose relics we have brought from Spain, together with the relics of SS. Stephen, Ferreolus, and Julian; also the relics of the Holy Cross, and of the most blessed St. George; and of SS. Gervasius and Protasius, and of Celsus, the boy martyr, whose relics are preserved as sacred there.')

By the same author (lib. 3, c. 9) it is stated that the Emperor Justinian presented St. Germain, Archbishop of Paris, when the latter, *viâ* Constantinople, was returning from a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, with an arm of St.

George, the Martyr, as a great treasure. This precious relic St. Germain bequeathed to the Abbey of St. Vincent, where he himself was afterwards buried.

Theodore Anselmini, a gentleman of Abruzzo, in his *History of St. George*, written in the year 1216, asserts, that besides the head of the Martyr, preserved in St. George's Church, Rome, by Pope Zachary; they have also one of his standards, some of his bones, and a little cloth red with his blood.' One of the Martyr's jawbones is preserved in Boulogne Cathedral to the present day.

Constantine the Great reverently raised the body of St. George from the place of its burial at Lydda, and placed it in a magnificent church, which he

built in honour of the holy Martyr in that city.

Churches erected in honour of St. George.

Constantine the Great, as we have just observed, built the first church in honour of St. George at Lydda. The Greek *Menology*, November 3rd, assures us of this fact. It states that 'not long after [St. George's martyrdom] religion then beginning to shine forth, and Constantine, the pious emperor, then reigning, such as were affected towards the Gospel and the Martyr built a beautiful and stately church at Lydda in his honour, translating thither his blessed body, taken out of an obscure corner, where it had been buried : ' This Temple has been so highly esteemed that the Feast of



its dedication has been faithfully observed during all succeeding generations.'

This church, having fallen into decay, was thoroughly restored by the Emperor Justinian, one hundred and fifty years after its erection. During the Crusades it was demolished by the Saracens, who feared that the large and massive beams, which they saw supporting the roof, might be used by the Crusaders as battering-rams for storming the city of Jerusalem.

It was again restored by King Richard I. of England, when the 'Lion-hearted' monarch joined the Crusades. The church now standing, together with the few scattered cottages inhabited by Turks and Arabs, is all that is left of the ancient town of

Lydda. Another church was dedicated to St. George at Rama, not far from Lydda, but this was likewise reduced to ruins by the Saracens.

These two churches of Lydda and Rama were exalted by the Pope, at the instance of Godfrey de Bouillon and the Crusaders, into the dignity of an episcopal see; and the first bishop of the diocese was entitled the Bishop of St. George, his jurisdiction being limited to the two churches, together with the neighbouring villages. According to the Greek Menology, churches were built in honour of St. George at Mitylene and Paphlagonia. The Emperor Justinian built another church in honour of the Saint at Leontopolis in Armenia, in the year 527.

There were several churches dedicated to St. George in the West. One in Thrace at a city called Didymotichum, another at Mentz in 556. Vincentius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, who was famous both for his piety and learning, has in his *Sacra Carmina*, published in 570, composed the following epigram on the occasion of the completion of St. George's Church at Mentz.

*In Basilicam Sti. Georgi, quam edificant
Sidonius Archiepiscopus Moguntinus :—*

Martyres egregii pollens miccat aula
Georgii,
Cujus in hunc mundum spargitur altus
honos.

Carcere, cæde, siti, vinclis, fame, fri-
gore, flammis,

Confessus Christum, duxit ad astra
caput.

Qui virtute potens, orientis in axe
sepultus,

Ecce sub occiduo, cardine prebet opem.

Ergo memento preces, et reddere vota,
viator :

Obtinet his meritis, quod petit alma
fides,

Condedit antistes Sidonius ista de-
center ;

Proficiant animæ, quæ nova templa
suæ.

Rendered into English verse by
Heylyn :—

St. George's glorious Temple here be-
hold,

Whose noble acts through all the
world are told.

Who, in so many different torments
tried,

Confessed his faith in Christ; confess-
ing died.

Who, great in power, though buried in
the East

Extends his wondrous graces to the
West.

Therefore pay here thy vows, whoe'er
thou be,

Where such a Saint is near to join
with thee.

This goodly Temple did Sidonius build
Unto his soul: may it due comforts
yield.

St. George's Church in Rome.

More ancient than the two temples
mentioned is St. George's Church in

Rome. The exact time of its foundation Heylyn could not ascertain. Its great antiquity, however, is evident from the letter written by Pope Gregory the Great to Maurinianus the abbot (Epist., lib. ix. cap. 68), when entrusting the restoration of St. George's Church to his care. The letter runs thus:—

‘St. George's Church, situated *ad sedem*, not being preserved with that care to which it is entitled, and being close to your monastery, we think it well to commit the care thereof unto you, requesting that you should employ your utmost diligence upon it, and see that the office of Psalmody [officium psalmodiæ] be solemnly performed. And since we have been credibly informed that it is out of

repair, it is our will that you collect its revenues, and spend them upon the work according to your discretion.'

As this letter was written by St. Gregory the Great, who died in the year 604, it follows that the church of St. George in Rome, solidly built as it was, must have been at least one hundred years old when the letter was written.

Pope Zachary, who ascended the pontifical throne in the year 742, built the church of St. George situated in the Golden Vale, Rome. He was induced to undertake this work by discovering the Martyr's head, together with the certificate of its genuineness, written in Greek, in the Cathedral church. When the church was completed he assembled the Romans to-

gether, and in solemn procession, with hymns and spiritual songs, carried the relic to the new church (see Anastasius, *Vita Zacharie*). Platina, however, is of opinion that this was the old church of St. George, renewed and completely restored, but not rebuilt, by Pope Zachary.

The church of St. George in the Golden Vale has for a long time been the title of a Roman Cardinal. In the church itself there is, or was in Heylyn's time, a painting of St. George, underneath which was the following inscription:—

‘Georgiam Cappadocem Anglia sibi protectorem elegit, et maximis beneficiis, tum pace, tum bello receptis, semper religiosissime coluit.’ (‘England made choice of St. George of Cappa-

docia as its Patron, and always honoured him most religiously on account of the many benefits, both in peace and war, received from him.')

It is not at all improbable that St. Gregory the Great, who took such a devoted interest in England, together with a great love for St. George, may have appointed him Patron of Britain during St. Augustine's time. In any case, St. Bede, in his Martyrology, enrolled St. George amongst the English saints.

John Comus, Bishop of Alexandria, in a letter addressed to Pope Clement, and dated December 28th, 1593, states that 'there are three churches in Alexandria—St. Michael the Archangel's, St. Mark the Evangelist's, and St. George the Martyr's, the latter of

which is situated outside the walls and facing the sea.'

There is a church of still more recent date, built in honour of St. George, at Cairo, and another at Beddi in Ethiopia.

St. George the Patron of Soldiers.

St. George is generally united with St. Sebastian, a fellow Tribune, and with St. Maurice, an officer of the Theban Legion, as one of the three great patrons of soldiers recognised by the Church. Baronius testifies 'that the Roman Church itself was accustomed to invoke the names of Maurice, Sebastian, and George to overcome the enemies of the Faith.'

The British nation has appropriated

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St. George to itself as Patron, whilst the Greeks, Russians, and Germans are contented with possessing him as Patron of their soldiers and military orders.

When the fierce followers of Mahomet overran the East, taking possession of Persia, Armenia, Media, Asia Minor, and all Palestine, including the city of Jerusalem, all the chivalry of the West rose in arms in response to the call of Peter the Hermit, backed by the powerful influence of Pope Urban.

The first army of Crusaders numbered no less than 300,000 fighting men. They were commanded by Robert, Duke of Normandy, brother of William Rufus, assisted by Hugh, brother of the King of France, Godfrey de Bouillon, Duke of Lorrain, together with his

brothers Baldwin and Eustace; and Tancred and Beaumont of Naples. Ademar, Bishop of Puy-en-Valey, accompanied the expedition as Papal Legate.

This grand army succeeded in driving the Saracens out of Asia Minor, compelling them thereby to retire into the eastern parts of their late conquests. The Crusaders then, passing over the Straits of Taurus, quickly took possession of the country and besieged Antioch, which, for the protection of their conquests, it was of vital importance to possess. After a long and desperate siege the city surrendered.

Extremely exhausted by the long and tedious operation, the leaders of the Crusaders thought to give their weary troops a thorough rest. Sud-

denly, however, they found themselves besieged by a large army of Saracens, who had arrived too late to raise the siege, but not, as they imagined, too late to retake the city.

Utterly unprovided with provisions for making a long resistance, the Crusaders soon found themselves in the dreadful dilemma of either carrying on a hopeless struggle or of surrendering. With horses dying for want of fodder, and with an epidemic of illness in the camp, despair stared them in the face. Resolving, however, like brave men, to risk their fortunes in battle, they marched out against the enemy. Robert, a Benedictine monk, in his *History of the First Crusades* (chaps. 1 and 7), written in 1120, describes what happened in these words:—

‘ Our soldiers, wearied with the long continuance of the battle, and seeing that the number of the enemy did not seem to grow less, began to waver, when, suddenly, an infinite number of heavenly soldiers, clad in white, descended from the mountains, their standard-bearers and leaders being St. George, St. Maurice, and St. Demetrius, whom, when the Bishop of Puy beheld, he cried out to the Crusaders: “ These are the succours that, in God’s Name, I promised you.” ’

The narrative further states that the Saracens fled in terror, having lost in the fight and pursuit that followed no less than 100,000 horsemen, and a countless number of foot soldiers. The famished Crusaders discovered in the trenches abandoned by the Saracens a

plentiful supply both of provisions and of munitions of war. This memorable battle was fought on June 28th, 1098.

Although Robert, the Benedictine Monk, published his record of this miracle thirty-two years after the battle, and consequently, during the lifetime of many of the Crusaders who were present on the occasion, many who believe in the Sacred Scriptures ridicule the notion that the great God of Heaven should send His soldier saints to overthrow the enemies of Christianity. They, however, readily believe in still more miraculous interpositions of God recorded in the Old Testament, such as the destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea, through the instrumentality of Moses, after which Miriam and the Hebrew

maidens sang their song of triumph (Exodus xv.) which has been beautifully rendered by Moore in his sacred songs :—

‘ Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s
dark sea !

Jehovah has triumph’d, His people are
free.

Sing, for the pride of the tyrant is
broken,

His chariots and horsemen, all splendid
and brave ;

How vain was their boasting!—the
Lord hath but spoken,

And chariots and horsemen are sunk
in the wave.

Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s
dark sea !

Jehovah has triumph’d, His people are
free.

‘ Praise to the conqueror, praise to the
Lord,
His word was our arrow, His breath
was our sword ;
Who shall return to tell Egypt the
story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of
her pride ?
For the Lord hath look’d out from His
pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are dashed
in the tide.
Sound the loud timbrel o’er Egypt’s
dark sea !
Jehovah has triumph’d, His people are
free.’

Christians of all denominations firmly believe in the destruction of Sennacherib’s army of 185,000 men, which was effected by a ‘blast’ from the Lord

(2 Kings, xix.), which afforded such a grand theme for the poetic genius of Byron :—

‘ The Assyrian came down like a wolf
on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold,
And the sheen of their spears was like
stars on the sea,
When the blue waves roll nightly on
deep Galilee.

‘ Like the leaves of the forest when
summer is green,
That host with their banners at sunset
were seen ;
Like the leaves of the forest when
autumn hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay withered
and strown.



‘ For the Angel of Death spread his
wings o’er the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as
he passed ;
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed
deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and
for ever grew still.

‘ And there lay the steed with his
nostrils all wide,
But through them there rolled not the
breath of his pride ;
And the foam of his gasping lay white
on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beat-
ing surf.

‘ And there lay the rider, distorted and
pale,
With the dew on his brow, and the
rust on his mail ;

And the tents are all silent, the banners
alone,
The lances uplifted, the trumpets un-
blown.

‘And the widows of Ashur are loud
in their wail ;
And the idols are broke in the temple
of Baal ;
And the might of the Gentile, un-
smote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of
the Lord.’

The interposition of St. George with the other saints at the critical moment, to rescue the army of the Crusaders, firmly established his reputation as one of the chief patrons of soldiers.

His name became more celebrated still by another incident of his mira-



culous intervention on behalf of the Crusaders. In an old book, entitled the *History of Antioch*, it is recorded that when 'the Christian army marched on Jerusalem, a beautiful young man appeared unto a certain priest, saying that he was George, one of the Captains of Jesus Christ, and informing him, at the same time, that if they carried his relics with them they could rely on his assistance. When afterwards the Crusaders besieged the holy city, and none dared to attempt to scale the walls, St. George, armed all in white, with a red cross on his breast, appeared in their midst, telling them to put away all fear and follow him. Obeying him they successfully stormed the city, and slew the enemy.'

A third apparition of the Saint is

mentioned by Baronius (*Annals of the Church*, 1190), who, describing the Emperor Frederick's expedition to the East, states that, when the army arrived at Finimum, near Laodicea, 'St. George was seen on that day, as he had done before, to march in front of the troops, which were under command of Lewis of Helfestein, in order to help the army.' Rupertus, in his appendix to Radevitcus, whom Baronius quotes, states distinctly that he heard this from Helfestein himself, who, in the presence of the Emperor, and of the whole army, declared the same on his solemn oath. He next affirms that the Saracens themselves declared that they had seen some troops fighting on the side of the Christians all clad in white, and mounted on horses of the same colour.

William of Tyre (lib. 3, cap. 22) relates that Godfrey de Bouillon, and other leaders of the Crusaders, induced the Pope to raise Lydda, where St. George was buried, to the dignity of an Episcopal See, thereby 'consecrating with all devotion the first-fruits of their labours to the glorious martyr.' They likewise named the Tower of the Two Sisters at Antioch 'St. George's Tower,' out of deep gratitude to the Martyr.

William of Malmesbury (*History of the English Kings*, bk. 4), speaking of the great slaughter of the Saracens at the siege of Antioch, bears witness that the 'Crusaders verily believed that they beheld those ancient martyrs, who had once been soldiers and are now in glory, George and Demetrius,

hastening from the mountains with outspread banners, casting darts amongst the enemy and succouring themselves'—the soldiers of the Cross. 'For,' as he logically argues, 'why might not God send His saints to assist Christians, as He once sent His Angel to assist the Maccabees : both fighting for similar causes ?'

St. George, Patron of England.

In St. George's Church at Rome, as already has been noticed, there is a painting of the Saint, and beneath it an inscription, which, translated into English, is : ' England made choice of George of Cappadocia as its patron, and has always honoured him most religiously, on account of the many benefits received from him both in

peace and in war.' Judging of this inscription, and by the fact that St. George is enrolled by St. Bede in his English Martyrology, it is certain that the holy martyr was appointed Patron of England at an early date, and not improbably by St. Gregory the Great. The great devotion of the English people for their patron did not manifest itself until a later period. But, as we need not say, no saint received such honour from the Britons and Saxons as our Lady. The good King Arthur, at the siege of Bonnefdown, fought under the banner of the Blessed Virgin, 'relying on the protection of the image of the Mother of God,' as we are told by William of Malmesbury (*De Gentis Anglorum*). Huntingdon (*Hist.*, bk. 2) informs us, too, that

King Arthur, when fighting his eighth battle against the Danes, 'carried the banner of the image of Holy Mary, the Mother of God, ever virgin, on his shoulders.' The seed of England's great devotion to its patron seems to have been sown by Arculphus, a French Bishop, who, after visiting the Holy Land and other Eastern countries, was shipwrecked somewhere on the western coast of Scotland. He was kindly received and most hospitably treated by Adamanus, Abbot of St. Columba's Monastery, in the island of Iona, about the year 690. St. Bede (*Hist.*, bk. 5, cap. 8) states that Adamanus was a good and prudent man, very learned in the sacred Scriptures, who, in his frequent conversations with Arculphus, learned the history of his travels, which



he compiled in a book presented by him to King Alfred of Northumbria. This book, which was entitled *De situ Sanctæ Terræ* ('On the position of the Holy Land'), contains a reference to St. George in the following passage: 'Arculphus, a holy man, hath told us everything regarding the Cross of our Lord, which he saw with his own eyes and kissed. He also told us of the history of a certain martyr, named George. He likewise declares that in Lydda there was a marble statue of the martyr, erected on the very pillar at which they bound him when he was scourged by the tyrant' (L. 3, cap. 4).

St. Bede, who flourished about the time of Adamanus, having probably learned the history of the martyr from him, placed the name of St. George

in his Martyrology and Ephemerides. The name of St. George was likewise inserted in the Martyrologies reserved for the Saxon saints, as Shelden proves by quoting an old Saxon manuscript. Judging from the handwriting, he attributes this manuscript of the Saxon Martyrology to Saint Dunstan, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in the year 971. Translated into modern English, the Martyrology read thus: 'On April 23rd, or Easter month as it is called, is St. George's Feast, that noble martyr whom Dacianus, the Emperor, for seven days together, urged, with unspeakable torments, to renounce Christ, which when he could not bring to pass he cut off his head.' At the end of this notice of St. George, Arculphus is mentioned as testifying to



the miracles which St. George wrought. This good Bishop, therefore, was the occasion of spreading great devotion to St. George in England.

Africus, the third Archbishop of Canterbury after St. Dunstan, ordained that a special place in the Calendar of the Saints should be given to St. George, and that the speech which he made in the tyrant's presence should be recorded.

There were no churches during the Saxon times in England dedicated to St. George, except, perhaps, St. George's Church in Southwark. After the Norman Conquest, devotion to St. George rapidly increased amongst the English people. William of Malmesbury and Huntingdon, as we have already seen, bear witness to the

Saint's apparition at the battle of Antioch, and the part he took in that victory. The monk of Chester, who flourished about the year 1350, in his *Polychronicon*, tells us of the numerous churches dedicated to St. George in this country. 'As for temples erected to him in these times,' the writer says, 'we have many.'

'In the year 1074, eight years after Harold's death, Robert D'Oyley, a Norman nobleman, when he had been granted large estates in Oxfordshire by William the Conqueror as a reward for his services, built a spacious castle on the west side of Oxford city, with deep ditches, ramparts, and a high raised mound, and a parish church thereon dedicated to St. George, unto which the parishioners could not



obtain access when King Stephen closely besieged the Empress Maud, who was in the castle, so St. Thomas's chapel was built in a street close by.'

About this time St. George's Church, Southwark, was built, unless it was erected in Saxon times, which is doubtful. King Edward III. beautified Windsor with a fine church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to St. George of Cappadocia. Camden, in his Remains, testifies that 'George has been a name of great respect in England since the victorious King Edward the Third chose St. George for his Patron, and the English in all encounters and battles have used the name in their war-cries, as the French did "Mountjoy and St. Denis."' "

During the reign of King Edward

IV., Simon de Sudbury, Bishop of London, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, rebuilt St. George's Church in Sudbury, where he, the prelate, was born, and also a college for the education of secular priests, entitled St. George's College. There was likewise a monastery dedicated to the Saint in Derbyshire, and another in Warwickshire. There was a chapel dedicated to St. George in old St. Paul's Cathedral, another in Lincoln, and a third at Norwich. At Ipswich, Stamford, and Burford also, churches have been built in honour of England's Patron.

The Order of the Garter.

It is recorded in the old Register of Windsor that 'when King Richard

waged war against the Turks and Saracens at Cyprus and Acon, and was weary of the long delays as the siege continued, and he was oppressed with trouble and anxiety till, acting on a divine inspiration, caused by the apparition of St. George as he imagined, it came into his mind to surround the knees of certain of his chosen knights with certain garters of leather, such only as he had then ready at hand. Whereby they being distinguished by this, and put in mind of future glory promised to them in case they won the victory, so that they might be stirred up and provoked to perform their service bravely, and fight more valiantly. This was in imitation of the Romans, who had such a variety of coronets wherewith their military men, for

sundry causes, were rewarded to this end, that by these instigations, as it were, cowardice being shaken off, the valour of the mind and the courage of the heart might show itself more resolute.'

'This passage,' says Heylyn, 'I have recited at full length, because there are some who have referred the institution of the noble Order of the Garter to this King, and on this occasion, and are verily persuaded that Edward the Third did only bring it again in use, being for a while forgotten and neglected. But herein as the learned Camden, who saw as far into antiquity as any man before his birth or since his death, gives but a cold assent, or, rather, no assent at all; so neither have I met with any of more judicious

sort who affirm it, although the opinion is held by many.'

*St. George's Day proclaimed a Solemn
Festival in England.*

The Church in England vied with the State in honouring St. George. The Festival of St. George's Martyrdom, which had long been commemorated in the Church, was first raised to a solemn festival in Oxford, in a synod assembled in that city. In the beginning of Henry the Fourth's reign, Archbishop Arundel was petitioned by the English clergy, at the instance of the King, to assemble a Convocation of the Bishops, in order that St. George's Day might be celebrated in England with as much

observance as other nations solemnised the festival of their different Patrons. It was not, however, until Henry the Fifth's reign that St. George's Day was proclaimed a solemn festival. When afterwards, in the reign of Henry VIII., many of the holy days of obligation were curtailed, St. George's Day was allowed to remain as a solemn festival. It was, however, omitted in the catalogue of Holy Days of obligation drawn up during the reign of Edward VI.

Conclusion.

It has been no easy task to digest and summarise, in this brief history of England's great Patron Saint, the main facts and authorities quoted by Peter

Heylyn in his *History of St. George of Cappadocia*, published in 1630. If it has succeeded in proving that St. George is a martyr with a complete history of his own, the labour has not been spent in vain. Every Catholic must admit that St. George was a real personage. Nevertheless, it has been generally thought that, besides the fact of his existence and martyrdom, everything else related of him is mythical. Yet Heylyn vividly puts before us a saint of flesh and blood, with a complete history.

It has been proved by a weighty mass of evidence that St. George was born of noble parentage, at Cappadocia, in the year 269; that he served both as a Tribune in the Roman army, and afterwards as a courtier in the Im-

perial palace, when Diocletian began to persecute the Christians; and that he openly protested against this persecution, and denounced the Roman gods in the Senate in the presence of the Emperor and of the Conscript Fathers. All the writers of his life are agreed that St. George, in the twenty-first year of his age, was subjected to a long and excruciating torture, and endured all his sufferings with heroic patience and fortitude: that he was beheaded on Good Friday, April 23rd, in the year 290, and that his remains were reverently buried at Lydda, in Palestine, by his servant Pascicrates, according to the Martyr's expressed wish. These facts alone should not only place St. George on a very pedestal in the national esteem of Englishmen; but

should also remind them that in their Patron they possess a powerful advocate before the throne of grace, whom they should invoke in their prayers. English converts especially, who have sacrificed home, friends, and position for the faith, should have a special affection for the youthful saint, who willingly resigned a high place in the Imperial Court; and, after distributing his wealth amongst the poor, openly professed his faith before men, and sacrificed himself for the religion which he loved from his childhood.

LONDON: STRANGWAYS, PRINTERS.



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