THE A.L
BRIGHT STORY READERS

AVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
ERNAKULAM.

ST. GEORGE OF MERRY ENGLAND

Re-told from SPENSER

No. 32

Grade 3

BOOKS IN THIS SERIES

Grade			
P	for ages 5 to 7	32	books
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ST. GEORGE OF MERRY ENGLAND

FROM

SPENSER'S "FAERIE QUEENE"

ALSO

THE RED CROSS KNIGHT

A DRAMATIC INTERLUDE

Illustrations by Ruth Westcott

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NAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
Date
ERNAKULAM.

ST. GEORGE OF MERRY ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

UNA AND ST. GEORGE

IT is said that once upon a time Fairies lived in the forests of Merry England. They were called the " Good People," and did many kind things to help those who were good, and who did them no harm.

But besides the Fairies, there were also Enchanters, Goblins, Dragons, and several other queer creatures. Most of these were wicked, and often caused great distress to those persons whom they did not like.

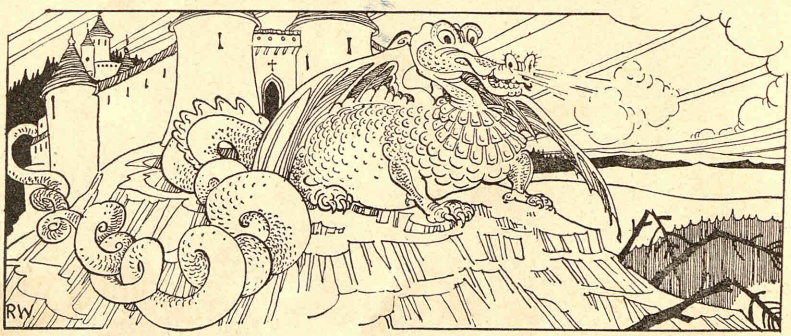
At this time, the Queen of the country was named Gloriana. She was a great and good Queen, and in her service were a number of Knights. These Knights were brave men, whom she sent out to help those who were in trouble or distress.

To all her Knights she gave magic powers, so that they were able to fight bravely and well. Queen Gloriana spent the whole of her life in trying to rid her land of the evil beings who did so much harm to her subjects.

At the time when this story begins, there lived a King and Queen who had once been rich, and had ruled over a large country. But a wicked

Dragon had killed their people, laid waste their lands, and kept the King and Queen prisoners in a strong castle. Round the castle was built a high, thick wall of brass. As the Dragon could not break through this, it waited at the gates to eat up all who tried to leave, or to enter the castle.

Brave Knights came from every part of the world, to try to destroy this powerful Dragon. But



Knight after Knight was killed in the attempt. The result was that the unhappy King and Queen had to remain in their castle.

The cruel Dragon grew quite proud of his success, for he knew that the only Knight who could kill him must be a true Christian Knight, and wear the Sign of the Cross on his breast.

This King and Queen had a lovely daughter, named Una, who was not a prisoner with her parents, but longed to be with them again. Una

was their only child, and loved her parents dearly. They had been kept in the castle for over four years, and she was anxious to set them free. She had heard of Queen Gloriana and her brave Knights, so she thought she would go to the Fairy Queen and beg for her help.

She set out on her journey dressed in a long white robe. She rode on a white ass, and with her she had a snow-white lamb, which she led by a cord. The lamb was for a present to Queen Gloriana, and as a sign of Una's purity and goodness.

A Dwarf followed behind her on foot. He held a spear in one hand, and led a fine war-horse with the other. On the back of this charger was a suit of armour, a silver shield, and a sharp sword. These were for the Christian Knight to wear, when Una found him. The armour was not new ; it was full of dents and bruises, which some other brave Knight, who had worn it before, had received in battle.

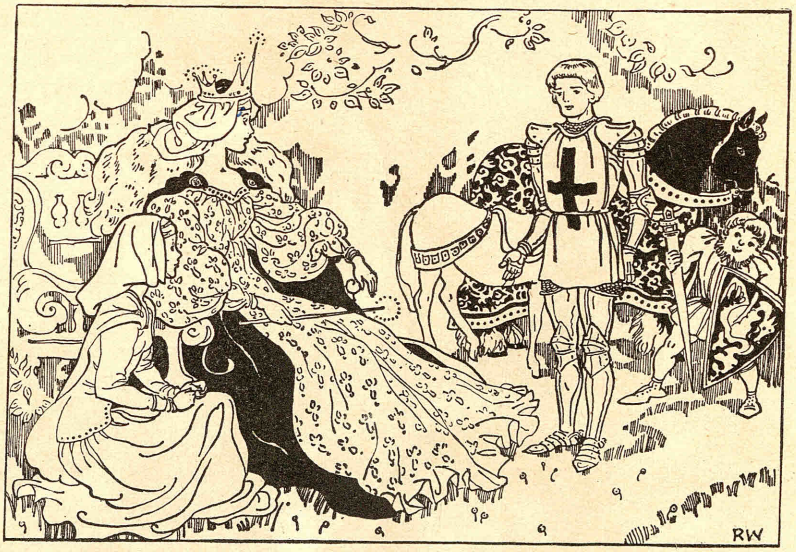
At length Una reached the Court of Queen Gloriana. Shortly before her arrival, a tall youth, strong, but rather simple-looking, had come to see the Queen, and begged her to let him go on her next errand of mercy, whatever it might be.

As he was talking, Una appeared, and, kneeling down before the Queen, cried,

" Oh, good Queen, help one who is in great distress ! My father and mother cannot leave their

castle because of a cruel Dragon; he is watching at the outer gate, and if they try to get away he will devour them."

On hearing Una's story, the youth eagerly



stepped forward, and asked that he might go on this errand.

Queen Gloriana and Una were both afraid that he would not be able to kill the Dragon, for he did not look much like a brave soldier. They were about to say "No," to him, but he begged so hard to be allowed to go, that he might show his skill and bravery, that at last the Queen said,

"If the Lady Una agrees, I will allow you to go."

"You may go on one condition," said Una. "If the armour which I have brought will fit you, then I shall be glad for you to go; if not, I cannot give my consent, for I feel sure you will not succeed in the dangerous task."

The armour was quickly brought from the back of the horse, and tried on. It fitted perfectly, and no sooner had the young man put it on, than his appearance was changed. Instead of the awkward youth, there stood a noble, and brave-looking Christian soldier.

Queen Gloriana was so pleased at his appearance, that she said he should be one of her Knights. She called him the "Red Cross Knight," because on the loose white coat which he wore over his armour, was a blood-red cross. But the name by which he is best known, and the one by which we shall call him, is Saint George—"St. George of Merry England."

St. George placed the silver shield on his left arm, fixed the sword to the girdle on his left side, and then mounted the horse which Una had brought with her.

He looked so brave, so noble, and so fearless, that Una quite loved him. She set out from the Court with him, feeling sure that St. George would be able to slay the Dragon.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST ADVENTURE

They started on their way, the Knight riding on his charger, Una sitting on the ass beside him, and the Dwarf following on foot.

When they had gone some distance, a terrible storm came on, which forced them to seek shelter. Not far off, they saw a shady grove ; this they soon reached, and here, under the spreading branches, they waited until the rain ceased.

The birds overhead did not mind the storm, but sang sweetly as the travellers waited below.

When the storm was over, the party attempted to leave the wood, but could not find the way out. They tried path after path, but each one led them farther and farther into the forest.

At last, seeing one track more trodden than the rest, they determined to follow it to the very end. This they did, and at length they came to a large cave, in the thickest part of the wood. The place was so dark and wild, that Una became afraid, and wished to turn back ; but the brave Knight stopped and dismounted.

" I will enter the cave," he said, " and see who dwells in it."

" Be careful," said Una, " or you may bring us into danger. I do not like this unknown and dismal place. Let us get away from it as soon as we can."

" Yes ! Yes ! Let us fly. Quick ! Quick ! " said the Dwarf, who was in a great fright.

St. George took no heed of Una and the Dwarf, but, with his sword drawn, he went straight into the cave.

His bright armour lit up the dreadful darkness, and inside he beheld an ugly monster, something like a serpent, with deadly stings all over it. It was lying upon the dirty ground. Its huge tail was coiled round and round, and nearly filled the entire cave.

The monster awoke when the light from the glistening silver shield fell upon it. It hated the light, and turned to hide itself in the darkest corner of the cave.

St. George ran after it and struck at it with his sword. This made the beast angry, and it reared its head and leapt fiercely forward. It caught the shield in its huge claws, and then wound its tail round and round the Knight's body, so that he could scarcely move hand or foot.

Una was standing at the mouth of the cave, and saw the danger St. George was in. She called to him, " Be brave, Sir Knight ! Now is the time to show your valour ! Strangle the beast, or it will kill you ! "

These words made the heart of St. George glad, and he fought with all his might. He managed to get one hand free, and grasped the creature

by the throat. After a severe struggle he cut its head from its body.

Una was overjoyed when she saw that the monster was slain.

"Fair Knight," she said, as she went up to him, "you are worthy of the armour you wear. May you be as successful in all your adventures as you have been in this one."

CHAPTER III

THE WICKED MAGICIAN

Una and St. George then left the cave, and again followed the well-trodden path. It led them out of the wood, then over a sandy plain, and across wild stretches of country.

As they went along they met a grave old man. He was dressed like a hermit, in a long black cloak; his hair was white with age; his feet were bare; he stooped as he walked; and a book of prayers hung from his belt by a silver chain. As he went along, he looked upon the ground, and appeared to be praying. Una and the Knight thought he was a holy priest, for he looked wise and good.

But his pious looks were all false, for he was a wicked enchanter named Archimago, who, by his tricks and lies, deceived everybody.

The Knight saluted him, and said, "Dear Sir, can you give us any news of the country around?"

"Ah, my dear son! how should I, a poor old man that lives in a lonely cell all day, be able to say what is going on in the land? But this I can tell you. There is a strange man who comes into these parts, and lays waste all the country far and near."

"Such a man I should like to find," said St. George, "and, if you will show me where he is, I will reward you. It would be a disgrace to me, as a Knight, to let such a man live."

"He dwells far from here, in a desert place," said the old man, "a place which no one can pass through without meeting with great dangers."

Una drew close to St. George, and said,

"It is getting dark, Sir Knight, and you are still weary with your late fight. Take rest to-night, and begin this fresh work with the new day."

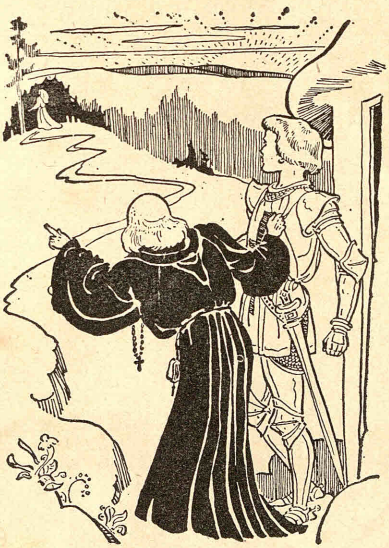
The aged man looked up.

"Sir Knight," he said, "this is good advice; come with me, and rest for the night in my cell."

To this St. George agreed, and the travellers set off to spend the night with the hermit.

At last they reached the small house where he lived. After Una had gone to rest, the two men talked together for a long time, and the old man told many lies to St. George. He said that Una's story, about the Dragon that kept her father and mother prisoners, was all false, and that she was only a cheat.

Archimago seemed to be such a good man, and the lies he told to the Knight seemed so true, that St. George believed him, though for a long time he could not think that Una had told him a falsehood.



Early next morning, when St. George woke after a restless night, the false old man came to his bedside, and said,

"The Lady Una has gone away. She does not care for you at all, nor for the noble deeds you wish to do. She is not a good woman, and does not mean to go any further with you."

At first St. George would not believe this, but Archimago led him to the door of the house, and pointed along the path. There, just going over the brow of a hill, was a figure which looked exactly like the Lady Una. But it was not Una; it was a wicked spirit which the Enchanter had dressed up to look just like her.

St. George thought it really was the Lady Una, and he became very angry, for he believed what the old man had said. At once he called the Dwarf, and they rode away together.

When Una awoke, she learnt that the Knight was gone, and that she was alone, and helpless, in a strange land, and would probably have to give up all hope of ever seeing her dear parents set free.

She bravely made up her mind to set out at once, even by herself, to find St. George. Urging on her ass, she followed as fast as she could, but the beast could not go at the same speed as a horse; and Una never caught up with her Knight.

CHAPTER IV

ST. GEORGE MEETS DUESSA

After he had left Una, St. George did not know where to go. He could not tell where he would find the wicked Dragon he had set off to kill, so he wandered far away in search of adventures.

Presently he saw two persons coming over the plain towards him. One was a tall, fierce-looking Knight. He rode a large and powerful black horse. He was fully armed, and across his shield was written, in bright letters, " Sans-Foy." He was a wicked, heathen Knight, and cared for no one.

His companion was a handsome Lady. Her dress was of scarlet, trimmed with rich jewels and gold. She was seated on a beautiful white horse, with a long flowing mane and tail. On its bridle were several small golden bells, which tinkled gaily as she rode along.

Sans-Foy and the Lady came forward, laughing and talking to each other. As the Lady looked up, smiling, her eyes fell upon St. George. Instantly her face clouded, and she turned to Sans-Foy.

"Now show me how well you can fight," she said to him. "Let me see you kill this strange Knight, who looks so proud and fearless."

When the heathen Knight saw the Cross on St. George's shield, he feared that he would be beaten. Still, he was brave, and made ready for the fight.

St. George, seeing this, lowered his spear, so as to be ready to receive him when he rushed forward. The two Knights rode madly at each other, and a great combat took place. St. George had to fight very hard, but at last he overcame Sans-Foy, and slew him.

As soon as the Lady saw that her companion was dead, she spurred her horse, and fled. St. George quickly went after her, and soon overtook her. He found her full of fear, thinking that she also would be killed.

But St. George was as kind-hearted as he was brave. He was filled with pity on seeing her distress, and said,

"Dear Lady, do not be afraid; I will not harm you. But who is this wicked Knight I have slain? How is it that I find such a lovely Lady as you are, in his company?"

The Lady burst into tears, and after a while said,

" Fair Sir, my father was a great King. I was to be married to a wise and good Prince, but, just before my wedding-day, my Prince was taken prisoner. I set out from my home to seek him, but his foes had killed him, and left his body on the plain. As I was going along, I met Sans-Foy. He took me captive, and made me go with him. Oh, Sir! have pity on me, for I am alone and friendless."

St. George tried to calm the Lady, and said,

" I will be your friend ; if you will come with me, I will protect you from all harm."

The maiden then dried her eyes, and she and St. George rode on happily together, the Dwarf following behind.

Now this Lady was not so good as she pretended to be. Although she looked beautiful, she was really a wicked witch, whose name was Duessa. She led St. George far out of his path, and took him into many dangers, until, at last, he was imprisoned by a cruel Giant. But you will hear all about this Giant in another chapter.

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MUNAVIRUL ISLAM HIGH SCHOOL
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CHAPTER V

UNA AND THE LION

For many days Una sought St. George, but in vain. One day, when she was travelling through a vast forest on her milk-white ass, she felt weary and tired, and alighted to rest herself.

She took off her long white robe, let down her fair hair, and allowed it to fall loosely around her shoulders, and then lay down on the grass in a shady place to sleep.

Whilst she was resting, there suddenly rushed out from the depth of the forest, a fierce and hungry lion. He ran towards her with jaws wide open, as if to devour her.

But as soon as he saw the lovely maiden, looking so sorrowful, even in her sleep, his rage changed to pity. Instead of springing upon her, to kill her, he walked gently up to her, lovingly licked her white hands, kissed her weary feet like a faithful dog, and refused to leave her.

This wakened Una. At first she was frightened, and watched the lion without daring to move, for she could scarcely believe her own eyes ; but when she saw how tenderly the lion looked at her, she burst into tears, and her heart was full of gratitude.

"This lion, the King of all beasts, forgets his rage, and pities me," she said.

Presently she arose to continue her search for

the lost Knight, and remounted her humble beast. To her surprise, the lion did not leave her, but walked by her side, like a faithful companion, to defend and guard her from all dangers. He never left her, but followed her wherever she went, and kept watch over her by day and by night. He stood, or walked, always by her side, and attended her every look.

One day, as they were passing through a forest, they came upon a footpath which Una resolved to follow, to see where it would lead her. She noticed, in the path ahead of her, a young girl carrying a pitcher of water on her shoulder. Una called out to the girl, " Does this path lead to any house ? "

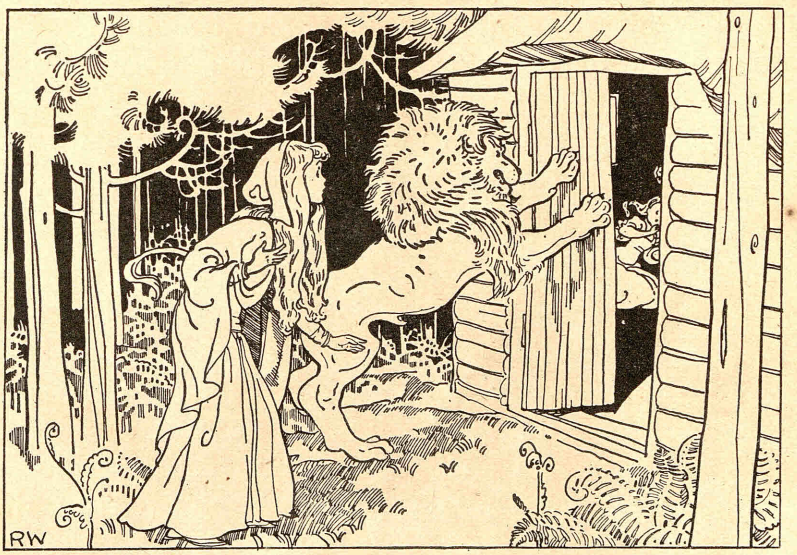
On hearing the Lady's voice, the maiden turned round, but she did not understand the words Una spoke to her, and as she was dumb also, she could not reply. When she saw the lion she became so frightened, that she dashed her water-pot to the ground, and ran away as fast as she could, not stopping till she reached her home.

Una watched her, and saw her enter a small hut. Here the girl lived with her mother, who was a wicked old woman, and blind, and, like Archimago, she deceived people by pretending to be very good.

The girl rushed into the house to her blind mother, trembling all over. The old woman could not see her, but felt her hands, and finding how

frightened she was, told her, in great haste, to close the door.

Just at this moment Una arrived with her lion. She begged hard to be allowed to enter, and rest,



but the door was closed in her face. At this, the lion became furious, and, lifting his great paws, he burst open the door, and let Una pass in.

Una found the two women crouching together in the far corner of the hut, almost dead with fear. She tried to calm them.

"Do not be afraid," she said, "nothing will harm you. I beg you will let me rest here this night."

They were afraid to say "No," so Una stayed in the hut. She made the door as secure as she could, and lay down on the floor, weary, and tired out. As she did so, the lion took up its place at her feet. But Una was too sad to sleep; she lay awake the greater part of the night, thinking of the lost St. George, and longing for the morning to come.

At early dawn, a sharp knock was heard at the door, but no one went to open it. The knocking became louder and louder, and the rough voice of a man outside was heard cursing and swearing.

"I will break in the door," said he, "if someone does not open it quickly."

Neither the old woman nor her daughter dared to venture past the lion to open the door, though the knocking continued. The noisy man outside was a wicked thief, who robbed churches, and took money from the poor-boxes. He hid whatever he stole with the old woman and her daughter.

As no one came to let him in, he became furious, for he carried on his back a heavy load of stolen goods. In his anger he thrust with all his might against the door, and it flew open.

No sooner had he got inside the room, than the lion rose from Una's feet, rushed upon him, and struck him down. His cries for help were unheeded. His friends were too terrified to move, and the lion tore him to pieces.

When daylight had fully come, Una once more set out with the lion, to seek the lost St. George. As soon as she had left the house, the two women came out of their dark corner, and finding that their friend was slain, they cried aloud with rage and sorrow.

Then they ran after Una, and, when they got near her, began to call her wicked names. They cursed her with dreadful curses, over and over again, saying they hoped that misery and sorrow would be with her all her life.

They would have killed her if they had dared, but they were afraid to touch her, because of the lion. At last, tired out, they turned back to their own home, weeping and wailing as they went.

On their way back, they met a man clad in armour, like a Knight, and wearing a red cross.

This man was that same wicked Archimago, who had told the lies to St. George. He had dressed himself up as a real Knight, in order to deceive Una.

On seeing the old woman and her daughter looking so sad, he asked, "What is the matter? Why are you so sorrowful?"

The old woman, glad to have someone to tell her troubles to, told him all that had happened during the night.

"How sorry I am to hear this bad news!" said Archimago; "but I will soon find the lady, and

you shall have your revenge. Which way has she gone ? "

They pointed in the direction that Una had taken, and he set off immediately.

CHAPTER VI

" SANS-LOY "

It was not long before Archimago overtook Una, travelling slowly along the road, with the lion walking by her side. But he was afraid to go near her, so he turned from the path to a hill, a little distance away.

The moment Una saw him, her heart beat with joy, for she believed him to be her long-lost Knight. She thought she knew the silver shield and the red cross, although, as Archimago had pulled his helmet over his face, she could not really see who he was.

She rode towards him, and, with tears in her eyes, exclaimed,

" Ah, my dear Lord, where have you been so long hiding from me ? How did I displease you ? '

" My dear Lady," the pretended Knight replied, " that wicked enchanter, Archimago, sent me far away on an adventure ; but now that I have returned I will never leave you ; I will always stay by your side, and defend you from all harm."

These words made Una feel very happy, and,

as they journeyed along together, she told him all the troubles that had lately happened to her.

They had not travelled very far, before they were met by a horseman, riding towards them at great speed. He was fully armed, and on his shield was written " Sans-Loy " in red letters.

This Sans-Loy was the brother of Sans-Foy, who had met the real St. George, and had been killed by him, shortly after the Knight had left Una. He had heard of his brother's death, and had set out to find the one who had done the deed.

When Sans-Loy saw the red cross on Archimago's shield his rage was very great, for he thought he had found the enemy he was in search of. At once he made up his mind to avenge the death of his brother.

He rode up to Archimago in a furious passion. Now, Archimago was a great coward, and had never fought as a Knight in his life. But Una spoke a few kind words to him, so he lowered his spear, and spurred his horse, in order to unseat Sans-Loy. On seeing this, Sans-Loy rushed at him with all his force, so that his lance went right through Archimago's shield, and the false knight fell heavily to the ground.

Sans-Loy then leapt from his horse, and ran towards Archimago to kill him.

" So, now, you who slew my brother, you shall now lose your life for his," he said.

Una, still thinking that the fallen Knight was St. George, begged the cruel Sans-Loy to have pity on his beaten foe.

" Oh, dear Sir," said she, " hold your hand, for he is one of the bravest and truest of Knights." But he took no notice of her.

He tore off Archimago's helmet, and was about to strike the fatal blow, when his hand fell helpless at his side, for before him he saw, not the face of the brave young Knight, but the hoary head of the wicked enchanter he knew so well.

" Why, Archimago ! What do I see ? Instead of fighting a foe, I am fighting a friend."

Archimago could not speak, so Sans-Loy turned to Una for an explanation, but she could give none. She only stood in wonder at the mistake she had made. But her wonder soon turned to fear, for Sans-Loy seized hold of her white veil, roughly pulled her from her ass, and, looking into her face, asked,

" What does all this mean ? "

The lion was soon at Una's side. He rose, full of rage at seeing his young mistress thus treated, and sprang upon Sans-Loy with his sharp claws, trying to tear his shield from him. But Sans-Loy was strong and wary ; he quickly drew his sword, and thrust it into the lion's heart.

The noble creature fell to the ground mortally wounded, and, turning over on his side, he roared

loudly, until life forsook him. Thus, Una was left helpless in the hands of this fierce warrior.

Poor Una! What was to become of her now? Her brave Knight was not with her; her protector, the lion, was dead; and she was in the power of a cruel foe, from whom she could not escape.

With tears she begged Sans-Loy to set her free.

"Oh, my dear Sir, let me go!" said she, but all in vain; he would not listen to her. Quickly lifting her upon his own horse, he rode off with her, whilst the ass, not wishing to forsake her mistress, followed at a distance.

CHAPTER VII

THE WOOD-FOLK

Sans-Loy carried Una along on his horse, and after a time they came to a wood, in which lived the "Wood-Folk," a simple and innocent people. Their dress was strange and their appearance such as Una had never seen before. Here Sans-Loy dismounted from his horse to rest a while.

Una was still weeping bitterly, and seeing her so full of sorrow, the Wood-Folk came flocking from all parts of the wood, to learn what was the matter. The sight of them so frightened Sans-Loy that he jumped on his horse again, left Una, and fled. The Wood-Folk, when they came up to Una, found her

sitting all alone. Her fair face was full of trouble, and her eyes were wet with tears; but still she looked beautiful in her distress.

The Wood-Folk pitied her. They tried to show that they wished to be her friends, and, smiling at her, came gently forward. She soon saw that they meant to do her no harm, so she rose, without showing any fear, and followed them.



Full of joy, they led Una along, shouting and singing, and dancing before her, until at last they came to their Chief, who was called Sylvanus.

When Sylvanus saw Una, he was astonished, for he had never before seen anyone so fair.

Everyone treated her with very great kindness, and she stayed a very long while in the forest with these simple folk. She tried to teach them what was right and what was wrong; but they were so ignorant, that she was unable to make them understand very much.

One day there passed through the forest where

the Wood-Folk lived, a noble Knight. He had been born in those parts, and he came from time to time to visit his kinsfolk who dwelt there.

In his early years he had played in this forest, and his father had taught him to be brave and fearless. As he was wandering among the trees, he saw Una sitting on the sward, and surrounded by the Wood-Folk ; she was trying to teach them good things. He watched her, and listened to the wise words which she was speaking. He came many days to the woods, and when he had seen her kind and gentle deeds, he began to admire her very much.

The Knight and Una became great friends. Una told him the story of her sad misfortunes ; how much she wished to escape from these woods, to find her long-lost Knight, and to rid her father's country of the dreadful Dragon.

This noble Knight's name was Sir Satyrane. After Una had told him her story, he at once began to think how he could please her, and help her to get away from the forest and the Wood-Folk, who did not want her to leave them.

It happened one day when Una was alone, for all the Wood-Folk had gone to see their Chief, that Sir Satyrane said to her,

" Now is our chance to escape ; we must leave this place at once."

Then he and Una rode away together, he on his horse and she on her ass, and soon they left the

forest far behind, and were out in the open plain. They hurried on, taking great care to leave no trace behind them, so that the Wood-Folk would not find out in what direction they had gone, and would not be able to follow them.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PILGRIM

Una and the good Sir Satyrane travelled together for some time, looking for the Red Cross Knight.

They had gone many miles over the plain, when they met a man dressed as a Pilgrim. His clothes were soiled with dust, and the sandals on his feet were worn out, as if he had travelled a long distance. His face was tanned with the scorching sun, and in his hand was a staff, on which he rested as he walked along.

Una and Sir Satyrane rode towards him with great speed, to see if they could obtain news of the lost St. George.

When they came to the Pilgrim, the Knight said,

"Good father, can you tell us of any adventures or wars that have taken place near here?"

But Una, anxious for different tidings, asked the Pilgrim,

"Have you heard of a Knight—a great champion—who wears on his armour a red cross?"

" Yes, indeed," said he, " I am sorry to have to tell you bad news, for I saw him both living and dead ! "

On hearing these words, Una became very sorrowful, and fainted away.

Sir Satyrane tenderly raised her from the ground, and tried to comfort her in her sorrow.

" Tell the Lady all you know," he said ; " it is better she should know the worst, than that she should live on in false hope."

Then the Pilgrim told this story.

" I chanced one day to see two Knights engaged in battle, and both were fighting with great fury. One was a Knight with a Red Cross on his armour, and I saw him slain before my very eyes," he said.

" Ah, dearest Lord ! " cried Una, " that could never be, for my Knight was the strongest and bravest that ever lived."

" But, dear Lady, how could I tell you this, if I had not seen the thing done ? "

" Where is he that has killed the brave St. George ? " said Sir Satyrane.

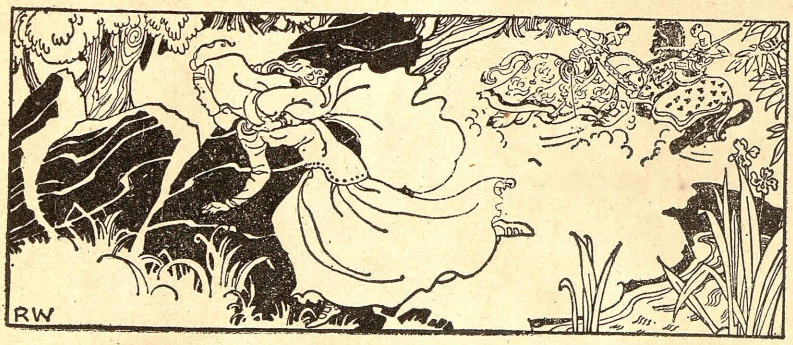
" Not far away," replied the Pilgrim. " I left him yonder by the side of a stream, washing his wounds, and cleaning his sword."

Without waiting a moment, Sir Satyrane set off in the direction the Pilgrim pointed, and left Una to follow him.

As soon as he came to the place, he found the

Knight hidden in the shadow of a rock, at the foot of which ran the stream the Pilgrim had told him of. Sir Satyrane called on him to come forth.

"You are a disgrace to all true Knights, for you have slain the noble St. George, the Knight of the Red Cross," said Sir Satyrane.



The Heathen Knight immediately made ready for the fray, and, drawing near to Sir Satyrane, said,

"You falsely accuse me, for I have slain no Red Cross Knight. I had a combat with a man who was dressed like a Red Cross Knight, and I should have slain him, but, when I took off his helmet to sever his head from his body, I found that my foe was my friend Archimago, the Enchanter; but for that error I will now challenge you."

They then fought furiously, and Una, full of dread at the sight, fled from the place.

In a secret corner, behind a rock, the Pilgrim had hidden himself, so that he could watch the fight. He was not a pilgrim at all, but the wicked Archimago, in another disguise.

When he saw Una fleeing from the spot, he went after her to try and bring her back, but he could not overtake her, and so Una was left once more to wander alone.

CHAPTER IX

GIANT PRIDE

After a time, Una began to go more slowly, and at last she met the Dwarf, whom she had given up for lost. She was glad to see him, but her heart sank when she found he was alone. He was carrying the spear and the silver shield of St. George, but the Knight was not with him.

Una was filled with sorrow at the sight; and as the Dwarf drew near, and saw how sad his young mistress was, he became as sorrowful as she, for he had bad news to tell her.

Then the Dwarf told her everything that had taken place, from the time that Archimago, the wicked Enchanter, had separated them, until now.

St. George ought never to have left Una, for those were the orders given him by Gloriana. It was because he did not obey her orders that he was led into much trouble.

The Dwarf told Una how the wicked witch, Duessa, first met St. George, and how they journeyed together for many days.

Then, one day the Knight was sitting by the side of a stream of water, resting himself, for he was very tired. He had taken off his helmet, and his horse was cropping the grass close by him.

Here it was very pleasant under the shade of the trees, with the soft breeze blowing ; but though it was a lovely place, the water of the stream was enchanted. When a person drank of it, all his strength left him.

St. George did not know this. He stooped down and took a hearty drink of the water, which was clear as crystal. Very soon he began to feel weak and ill, and in a few moments he had no strength left.

While lying stretched on the bank in this helpless state, he heard a dreadful sound—a loud roaring, which echoed through the wood. The Knight started up at once, but before he could put his armour on, or seize his sword, a hideous giant, more than three times as high as a man, appeared before him. This Giant's name was "Pride."

In his hand he carried an oak tree, which he used as a weapon ; he came striding up to the Knight in a terrible rage, and struck at him with great fury.

Now St. George was so weak and ill that he could not fight and defend himself ; but he watched the Giant as he took aim to strike at him, and leapt on one side, just in time to escape the blow.

The wicked witch, Duessa, begged the Giant to spare the life of the Knight, and only take him prisoner.

" Ah ! Great Giant Pride," she said, " spare him for my sake, and do not kill him. Make him your slave if you will, and I will be your wife."

Great Giant Pride was very pleased with Duessa's plan. He lifted up St. George in his arms, and carried him quickly to his castle, where he threw him into a dark dungeon.

CHAPTER X

PRINCE ARTHUR

When the Dwarf had finished telling Una the sorrowful news about St. George, she made up her mind to go to Giant Pride's castle.

" I will find my dear Knight," said she, " whether he be dead or alive."

So she and the Dwarf started at once for the dungeon where the Red Cross Knight was a prisoner.

They wandered many weary days through woods, and across valleys, over hill and dale, in wind and storm, and fine weather, for the journey was a long one. But Una would not give in.

At last, by good fortune, they met a very noble-looking Knight, named Prince Arthur, with his much-loved friend, Timias.

The Prince was dressed in bright, glittering armour. Across his breast he wore a beautiful sash, covered with precious stones and jewels that sparkled like stars.

By his side hung his trusty sword, carried in an ivory sheath, most beautifully carved, with a handle of mother-of-pearl. It was buckled to his belt with a golden clasp. His helmet also was of gold, and on it he had a golden dragon for his crest.

His shield was covered up, for it was so dazzling that no eyes could look upon it. It was one solid piece of pure and perfect diamond. Prince Arthur never let his shield be seen, unless he wished to dazzle and blind some huge monster, or frighten large armies who came against him.

No enchanter or magician had any power over this shield, for by its brightness the wearer could blind the proud, turn men into stone, turn stones to dust, and dust to nothing.

This wonderful armour, shield, and sword, had been made for Prince Arthur by Merlin, who was a great and good Magician.

Timias, the friend of Prince Arthur, was a noble youth. He carried a long spear made of ebony, and rode a fiery steed, which he managed with much skill.

As Prince Arthur came up to Una, he bowed to her, and said,

"Dear Lady! why do you look so sorrowful? What is the cause of your grief?"

These kind words cheered Una very much, and she at once began to tell Prince Arthur the story of her dear parents, who were kept shut up by the horrid Dragon. And then she told how Gloriana had ordered the Red Cross Knight to set them free, and how Giant Pride had made him prisoner, and put him in a dungeon, where he now lay helpless.

"Truly, Lady, you have much to make you sad," said the Prince, when Una had finished. "But be of good cheer! I will not leave you until I have freed the captive Knight from this cruel Giant."

CHAPTER XI

THE WONDERFUL BUGLE

Prince Arthur and Timias, with the Lady Una and the Dwarf, set off together. They travelled on until they saw, in the distance, Giant Pride's castle with its strong, high walls.

"See!" said the Dwarf, as the castle came into sight. "See! there is the place where my unhappy master is kept prisoner by the cruel Giant."

When they had nearly reached the outer walls of the castle, Prince Arthur got off his horse. He told Una to stay where she was, and he and Timias then marched up to the gateway.

They found the gate closed, and nobody was there to keep guard or to answer their call, though the Prince shouted loudly several times.

Timias had a small bugle with a gold cord and tassels, hanging by his side. It was a magic horn, and wonderful stories were told about it. Every wrong-doer trembled when he heard its sound. Whenever it was blown, it echoed three times, and the shrill note could be heard three miles off.

No matter how strong the gate, or how firm the lock, when a powerful blast was blown on this wonderful bugle, the closed door flew open at once.

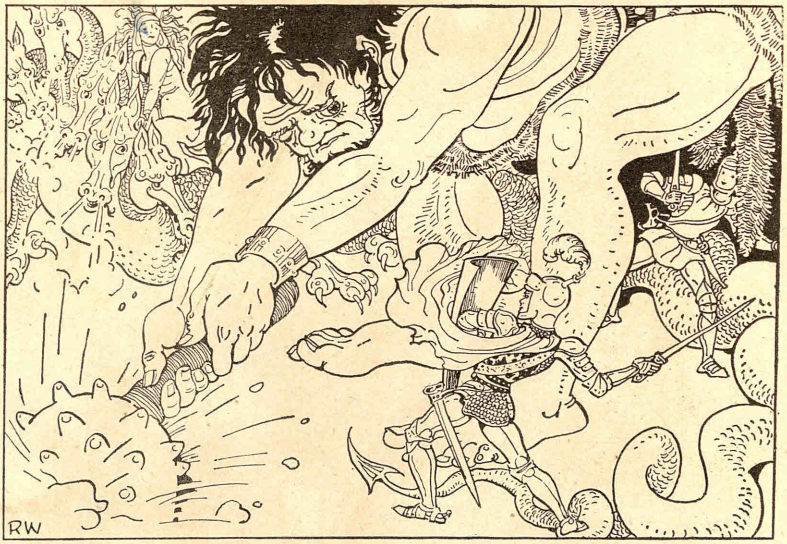
As no one came to answer their call, Timias stood in front of the gate, and blew a loud blast on his horn. In an instant the gate opened wide, and out rushed Giant Pride to see who had dared to come near his castle and make this dreadful noise.

After him came Duessa. She was riding upon a dragon with seven heads. On every head was a crown, and each mouth had a fiery flaming tongue darting out of it.

No sooner did Prince Arthur see the Giant, than he at once prepared to attack him ; he took

his shield on his left arm, and his mighty sword in his right hand.

The Giant lifted up his club, and tried to kill the Prince at a single blow, but the Prince watched



the falling club and leapt to one side ; the weapon came down with such force on the ground that it buried itself deep in the earth, so that the Giant could not pull it out again.

Whilst the Giant was tugging at his club to drag it out of the ground, the Prince raised his sharp sword, and at one blow struck off his left arm.

The Giant roared aloud with pain, and Duessa, seeing him in danger, tried to help him. She rode towards the Prince on her many-headed dragon, and tried to overthrow him; but brave Timias kept the monster back with his drawn sword.

From the folds of her cloak, Duessa then took a goblet made of fine gold. This goblet she always carried with her; it was full of a powerful poison, and those who drank of it died at once; if any of the poison fell on them, they lost all power to move. She again urged the dragon forward, and got so near to Timias that she was able to sprinkle some of the poison over him. Immediately his strength left him; he became weak and helpless, and fell down in front of the cruel beast.

The dreadful creature at once seized him with its claws, and would have crushed the life out of him, but Prince Arthur, seeing this, left off fighting with the Giant. He rushed at the monster, and, with a mighty blow, struck off one of its heads.

The horrible beast moved back a little, but the Giant, who had by this time got his club out of the ground, now came to the aid of Duessa; he struck at the Prince with great force, and this time he felled him to the ground.

As the Prince rolled on the ground, his wonderful shield became uncovered. At once there flashed from it a ray of dazzling light, too bright for the eye to look upon.

The Giant's weapon dropped out of his hand. The dragon was struck blind, and his strength left him. He fell to the ground, and, uttering horrible groans, he died.

"Oh, help! dear Giant, help! or we shall all perish," cried Duessa. But the Giant was unable to move, for the bright shield had taken away all his strength. There he lay helpless on the ground, with no power either to defend himself, or to hurt others.

By this time Prince Arthur had gained his feet. He rushed up to the Giant, and smote off his head. The moment he had done this, the huge body began to shrink away; it slowly got smaller and smaller, and soon nothing was left but a dried and empty skin.

Thus was the end of Giant Pride brought about by the wonderful shield.

Duessa was seized with great fear when she saw that the Giant was dead; she threw away her golden goblet, flung her crown after it, and fled away on foot with all haste. But Timias followed her and brought her back, and Prince Arthur told him to keep watch over her, so that she could not get away, while he went forward into the castle to search for the good St. George.

"So, ho!" cried he aloud when he had reached the courtyard; "is anyone here?" But no one answered. He called still louder, but silence was

everywhere. Not a person was to be seen, nor a sound heard, except the echo of his own voice.

At length, a little old man came slowly towards him. He was very, very old, with a beard as white as snow. On his arm he carried a bunch of rusty keys, and guided his feeble steps with a stick.

"Where are all the inmates of this castle?" asked Prince Arthur, as soon as the old man got near to him. But the old man only shook his head, and replied,

"I cannot tell."

Then the Prince asked him,

"Where is the Knight whom Giant Pride took prisoner?" And again the old man answered,

"I cannot tell."

"Then, tell me, which is the way into the dungeon?" And once more the old man shook his head, and said,

"I cannot tell." This was the truth; for the man was very ignorant. He had lived so long in the castle, that he knew nothing, nor did he want to know anything. He had nearly lost his senses.

The Prince now became angry, for he thought the old man was making fun of him; so he took the bunch of keys from his arm, and went forward to search the castle by himself.

He opened every door, trying first one key and then another; all the rooms were furnished with

very great splendour, but the place was dirty, and nowhere could he find any trace of the Red Cross Knight.

CHAPTER XII

THE RESCUE

At length the Prince came to an iron door, which was locked, and none of the many keys upon the bunch would open it.

In the middle of the door was a small grating. Through this Prince Arthur looked, but there was nothing to be seen, for the inside was as black as pitch. Then he called in a loud voice,

"Is anyone here?"

Presently he thought he heard a feeble voice. The sound was so faint that Prince Arthur could at first only hear a moaning, but he called once more,

"Is anyone here?" and after listening carefully, he caught the words,

"Who are you? Here I have been kept a prisoner, bound, and in darkness, for three months. Now I am dying."

No sooner did the Prince hear these sorrowful words, than his heart was filled with deep pity. With all his strength he rushed at the door, and burst it open.

Just inside the door was a deep flight of stairs

which went down into a dark pit. So dark was this pit that nothing whatever could be seen; but neither darkness, nor dirt, nor the foul-smelling air that came from below, kept back the Prince.

He went carefully down the steps till he reached the bottom of the dungeon, and then groped about in the darkness. At length, he found poor St. George, chained up in the farthest corner, and so feeble and ill that he could not stand, or even raise himself to his feet. With great trouble the Prince freed the Knight, lifted him up in his arms, and carried him out through the courtyard and beyond the gate, into the open field outside the castle walls.

What a sad sight the Red Cross Knight was! His eyes were dull and sunken, and he could not bear the light; his cheeks were thin and hollow, and his once powerful arms and body were wasted away. All his strength was gone, and he was nearly dead with hunger, pain, and suffering.

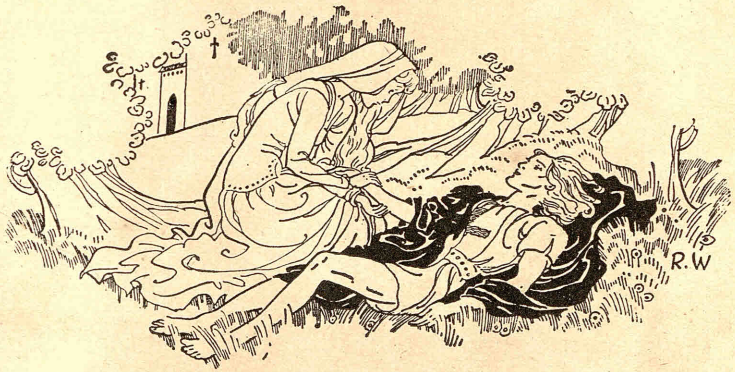
Una, who was standing close to the castle gate, watching everything, rushed to meet Prince Arthur. He carried St. George as tenderly as if he had been a young child, and laid him down on the green grass, under the shadow of a tree that grew near.

With her eyes full of tears, and quite overjoyed at his rescue, Una cried out,

"My dearest Lord, welcome back! But what sad trouble you must have gone through to change you thus."

The Knight looked at her, though he was too feeble to speak, and the Prince asked Una not to talk to him until he was strong again.

Prince Arthur and Una decided to stay for a



time in Giant Pride's castle to rest themselves, and until St. George could be safely moved.

Duessa fled to the desert and lived there, hiding in the rocks and caves, and keeping from the light of day, which she hated so much.

After a time, when St. George had partly recovered, and was able to walk about again, Una took him to the House of Holiness, which was not far from Giant Pride's castle, to be there nursed till he was quite well and strong. She, herself, went to another house close by, and rested with the good lady Charity, so that she might be near her dear Knight.

They both took leave of Prince Arthur and his

squire Timias with much regret, for St. George owed his life, and Una her present happiness, to the Prince's kindly help. They rested for some time, and when the Knight had quite regained his strength and courage, they once more set out to kill the Dragon and set Una's parents free.

CHAPTER XIII

THE END OF THE DRAGON

In due time, St. George and his companion reached the castle where Una's father and mother were kept captive. All the land round about showed where the cruel Dragon had wandered, for his footsteps could be seen everywhere.

"Dear Knight," said Una, "you have suffered much for my sake. Now we are come to my own country, but it is a place of great danger. Here the terrible Dragon lives, and you must be on your guard against it."

As she spoke, a hideous roar, like the loudest thunder, was heard, and the very ground where they were standing shook under their feet.

They looked from whence the sound came, and there, in front of them, lay the dreadful beast, stretched out at full length in the sun, by the side of the hill. The sound they heard was its yawn, as it awakened out of sleep.

It lifted up its head, and, observing the Knight

and the Lady in the distance, it got on to its feet. No sooner did it see the Knight's shining armour, than it hastened towards them at full speed.

St. George begged Una to leave him, and go to the top of a hill a little distance off, where she could watch the fight, and still be quite safe.

She had hardly got to the side of the hill, when the dreadful creature rushed towards the Knight, half flying and half running in its haste to meet him. Its great body was covered with large brass scales like a coat of mail, and so closely were they placed together, that nothing could get between the joints.

As the Dragon moved along and shook itself, the scales jingled loudly, and sounded like the clashing of armour.

From each side of its body spread immense wings, like huge sails, and at the end of its great knotted tail, which was twisted into more than a hundred folds over its scaly back, were two stings, sharper than the sharpest sword. Its tail, when unfolded to the full length, swept the land behind for three furlongs.

At the end of its feet were strong, sharp claws, which destroyed everything that they touched.

Its head was horrible to look at. It had large, fiery-red eyes, and a wide, gaping mouth, in which were set three rows of iron teeth. A cloud of dense and smothering smoke issued from its open jaws.

Such was the frightful creature which St. George had to fight with, and to kill.

On came the fiery Dragon, lifting up its horrid head, and shaking itself with rage; but the Knight was brave; he lowered his spear and rushed on, fiercely, and without fear, to meet his awful foe. He did not succeed in wounding the creature, but annoyed it so much that it turned quickly about, and, lashing its immense tail round the horse's legs, threw both horse and rider to the ground. In a moment the Knight sprang to his feet, unhurt, and attacked the monster once more.

The Dragon now spread open its great wings, lifted itself high into the air, and, darting down, seized both the Knight and the horse in its cruel claws. It carried them into the air, but they struggled so hard to get free, that it let them fall.

Neither horse nor rider was much hurt, and St. George aimed a blow at the creature's breast. His spear glanced aside when it touched the brazen scales, and slipped under the Dragon's wing, causing a terrible wound. The creature roared with pain, making a noise like the howling of the wind in a wintry storm.

After much struggling, the Dragon managed to tear the spear out with its claws. Then a stream of black blood flowed from the wound, and flames of fire issued from the beast's nostrils.

Once more the awful creature lashed its great

tail about. Again it twisted round the horse's legs, and horse and rider came to the ground. But St. George got up quickly and, with his sword, struck the Dragon a fearful blow on the back of the head.

And now, the monster tried to rise in the air, but the wound under its wing, and the pain in its side, prevented it. It roared louder than ever, and from its mouth came flames of fire so hot that they scorched St. George through his armour.

The battle lasted all day. When it was nearly dark, St. George, faint and weary, and sore from wounds, was near to death. The Dragon, seeing him so worn out, lashed its tail round, and brought the brave Knight to the ground for the third time.

Now it happened that close by was a spring of water, which had wonderful powers of healing. It could restore youth to the aged, and bring back the dead to life. As the Knight fell, he rolled backwards into this spring.

The great Dragon flapped its wings for joy, thinking he had gained the victory. But the wonderful powers of the water soon restored the Knight, and as he scrambled out of the stream and reached the opposite bank, he felt strengthened and refreshed.

The Dragon, seeing St. George beaten, as he thought, left him until the next day.

Una, who had anxiously watched the fight all

day from her place of safety on the hill, saw her friend fall. She thought that all was lost, and she grew more sad than ever. She dared not go to him for fear of the Dragon, and she spent the long hours of the night in prayer, for she could not sleep.

The brave hero lay down by the side of the stream, and rested until the next morning. When daylight came he felt himself stronger than ever, and quite ready to continue the battle.

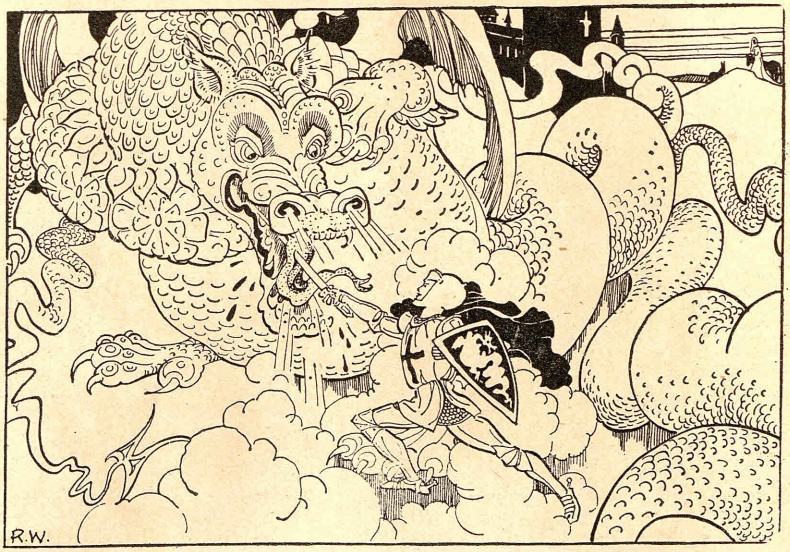
As soon as the sun had risen in the sky, the Dragon again came forward to meet the brave St. George. All through the second day the fight lasted, and when the sun began to sink, the Knight's strength was again almost gone.

Una watched all day as before, and was surprised to see how strong her brave Knight was, for he had given the monster many wounds.

But the Dragon was not yet beaten. It left St. George once more, until the next day; and this night the brave hero rested under a beautiful tree, called the "Tree of Life." In the morning he rose refreshed after a sound sleep.

On the third day the Knight advanced to meet the Dragon, strong and brave as ever. The creature rushed towards him with jaws wide open, thinking to devour him, but St. George thrust his keen sword into the monster's mouth, and made a wound which caused the Dragon to stagger, and then fall dead at his feet.

Una had again seen all that had happened from her watching-place on the hill. When she saw that the terrible monster was really dead, she approached the castle gate, in front of which the combat had



taken place, and thanked her brave warrior, many, many times, for this great deliverance.

The watchmen on the castle walls shouted out the glad news, that all might hear it, " The Dragon is slain ! The Dragon is slain ! " for they also had watched the combat from one of the high towers, and had seen the Dragon defeated.

CHAPTER XIV

HAPPINESS

When the King heard the joyful tidings, he commanded that the gates of brass, which had been closed so long, should be opened. He also sent heralds out to all parts of the kingdom, to tell the people that the Dragon was slain.

Then he came forth with his Queen, followed by their nobles, and a number of young men bearing laurel boughs. With the King at its head, the procession came straight from the castle gates to St. George.

The trumpeters blew their trumpets in honour of the victory, and as the procession reached the Knight, the young men knelt down before him, cast their laurels at his feet, and proclaimed him their great deliverer.

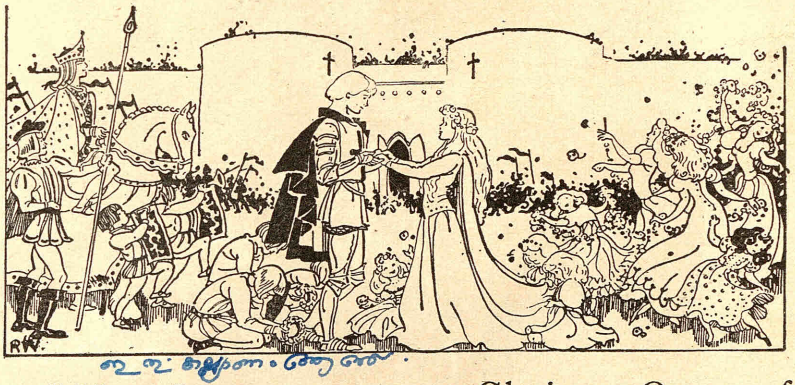
As they did so, a second procession, this time of young maidens, carrying garlands of beautiful flowers, came merrily along, and with them were troops of happy children singing and dancing.

This procession came to the spot where Una was standing, and when they had reached her, the leader crowned her with a beautiful wreath of flowers, so that she looked, as she really was, a beautiful Queen.

Then the King and Queen, with Una and the Knight, and all their nobles, returned to the castle,

where a great feast was held to celebrate the overthrow of the Dragon.

At the King's request, St. George told the company the story of his adventures, finishing up by saying,



"Now I must return to Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland, and serve her, according to my vow, for six years more."

"My dear son," said the King, "you have passed through great dangers, and are almost worn out; I beg of you to stay with us for some time and rest."

"Sire," replied the brave St. George, "I must not think of resting. My duty is to Queen Gloriana, and I must return to her and do it."

The King was very sorry, but he knew that a vow, once made, must be kept.

"Well," said he, "as soon as the six years are

over, you must come back and marry my daughter, the Lady Una. I promised, years ago, that whoever killed the Dragon should have my daughter for his wife. You shall have both my daughter and my kingdom, as your reward."

Then the King and Queen, seated on their throne, sent for Una. When she came in, the King took her by the right hand, placed it in that of the brave Knight, and gave them the blessing of himself and his wife.

St. George returned for a time to the Court of Queen Gloriana, where he performed many other great deeds. As soon as the six years were over, he came back, and married his dear Una.

They lived happily together for many years. St. George was a great ruler, and did all he could to help his people, and Una was very much loved for her deeds of charity.

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CHAPTER XV

ST. GEORGE OF MERRY ENGLAND

The tales you have been reading about St. George and Una, and their various adventures, are old. They were written, more than three hundred years ago, by a clever and learned man called Edmund Spenser (who lived in England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth), and are part of a very long poem, called " The Faerie Queene."

In this little book the stories are not in poetry, but are told in such a way that you can easily understand them. Spenser did not simply tell a pretty story; he tried to show that to do good deeds, and to live a good life, is the way to be happy.

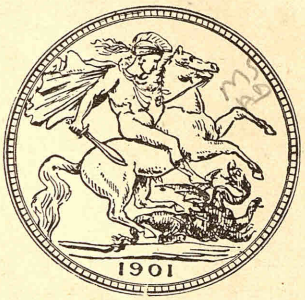
We call St. George the patron saint of England. It would be a very long story to tell you how this came about, for he was born in the East, and lived in a country near the shores of the Black Sea.

We know very little about his life and death, but we do know this, that he was a very good Christian man, and was always ready to help those who were in trouble, especially the Christians. In years long gone by, the Christians were not allowed to worship freely, as they are now, and many of them were put to death because they believed in Christ. It is said that St. George was executed.

Many people thought so highly of St. George, that they began to call churches after his name. It is said, also, that in the sixth century, King Arthur of Britain put a picture of St. George on his banner, to show his soldiers that they were to follow the example of this great and good man.

In 1413, King Henry V held a Council at London, and it was then ordered that a Festival should be held on the 23rd of April in each year, in memory of St. George. Many people still keep

St. George's Day, and wear a rose in honour of the Saint.



Five-shilling Piece
(actual size)

But we have other ways by which we remember St. George. If you have a chance, look at a five-shilling piece, a sovereign, or a half-sovereign. On one side of each coin you will see a figure of St. George, seated on horse-back, in the act of slaying the Dragon. His spear has been broken in the fight, and part of it lies on the ground near the horse's hind feet. The Dragon is lying partly on its side, and, with gaping mouth, is darting out its forked tongue at the breast of the horse.

But St. George, with his short sword in his hand, is skilfully steering his horse so that he can strike a deadly blow, and kill the wicked animal.

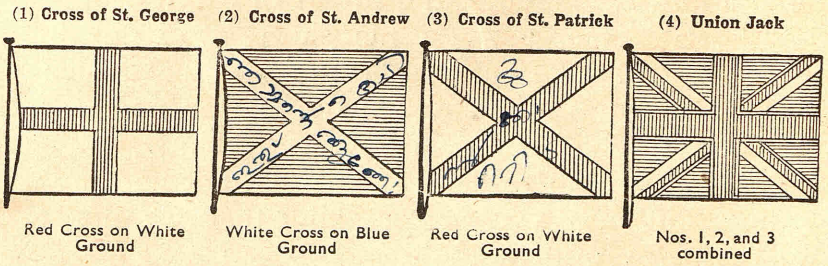
Now, what does the story of St. George killing the Dragon mean to us ? It tells us that he fought against sin and wickedness, and that we are to follow his example.

Every boy and girl knows our National Flag, the Union Jack. In this flag we have another way of keeping St. George in remembrance.

This flag has been styled " a trio of crosses," for it is made up of the Cross of St. George of England, the Cross of St. Andrew of Scotland, and the Cross of St. Patrick of Ireland.

The flag of "St. George of Merry England" is a red cross on a white ground. The red lines are drawn straight from top to bottom, and from side to side. This cross is said to have been worn by the English at the Crusades, and the flag was used by Edward III during his wars with France in 1346 to 1360.

The flag of St. Andrew is a white cross on a blue ground. The broad white lines are drawn from corner to corner. The flag of St. Patrick is a red cross on a white ground. The narrow red lines are drawn from corner to corner, just like the cross of St. Andrew, only the colours are different.



By laying the Cross of St. Patrick over that of St. Andrew, and then placing that of St. George over both, we have the "Union Jack," which has been used ever since Ireland was united to Great Britain in 1801.

THE RED CROSS KNIGHT

A DRAMATIC INTERLUDE
by
GEORGE H. HOLROYD

CHARACTERS

QUEEN GLORIANA, a fairy Queen
HERALD
UNA, a beautiful Princess
A DWARF, Una's servant
A TALL SIMPLE-LOOKING YOUTH
QUEEN'S ATTENDANTS

Each person entering the court should bow to the Queen.

SCENE I. *The court of Queen Gloriana.* QUEEN G. *is surrounded by her Knights and Ladies of the Court.*

[*Enter* HERALD.]

HERALD. May it please your Majesty, there is without a youth who asks for audience.

QUEEN G. Describe him to me, Herald.

HERALD. He is tall and well favoured, your Majesty, but he seems withal a simple country youth.

QUEEN G. I will see him.

HERALD. As your Majesty wishes [*Exit* HERALD].

QUEEN G. [*to her Knights*]. Know you of this youth who seeks audience?

[*The Knights murmur* 'No' *as the* HERALD *enters and brings the* YOUNG MAN *with him.*]

HERALD. May it please your Majesty, here is the young man.

[*The* YOUNG MAN *bows low. The* HERALD *retires.*]

QUEEN G. What is your mission, young man?

YOUNG MAN. I wish to join your noble following of Knights, and I do desire that your Majesty shall set me some task, the performance of which will enable you to make me a Knight.

QUEEN G. Well spoken, young man, but I warn you that it may be some time before we can find you a suitable task, so bravely have my Knights destroyed the evil things of the world.

[*Enter* HERALD.]

HERALD. May it please your Majesty, a Princess Una from a far-off kingdom seeks audience with your Majesty.

QUEEN G. Bring her immediately into the presence, Herald.

[*The* HERALD *retires and returns immediately with* PRINCESS UNA, *following whom is the* DWARF.]

HERALD. The Princess Una.

QUEEN G. [*rising from her throne*]. Welcome, fair Princess. We are glad you honour us with a visit.

PRINCESS UNA. Your Majesty is most gracious, but my errand is a most sad one. I come to ask a favour.

QUEEN G. Speak up, fair Princess, for if it be in my power to grant your request, it shall be so.

PRINCESS U. Far and wide has spread the glory of your court, and the valour of your Knights. The King and Queen, my father and mother, are grievously beset and are kept prisoners in their castle by a most fearful dragon, whose mortal prey has robbed our kingdom of the fairest of all our Knights. The dragon cannot enter the castle which is surrounded by a thick wall of brass, and anyone seeking to leave, or enter, is immediately killed by this foul monster who glories in his deeds of ill fame. Our only hope is for some brave Knight, with the sign of the Cross on his tunic, who shall kill this demon.

[*The* YOUNG MAN *steps forward.*]

YOUNG MAN. May it please your Majesty to send me.

QUEEN G. You ! I am afraid you have not the skill. I must send one of my bravest proven Knights.

YOUNG MAN. I beg of your Majesty to try me.

PRINCESS U. If the armour carried here by my servant, the Dwarf, fits him, may I plead his cause ?

QUEEN G. With much misgiving, I agree.

YOUNG MAN. Your Majesty's kindness to me shall not be forgotten.

[*Exit* YOUNG MAN *and* DWARF.]

QUEEN G. This young man is as yet untried, and I do not feel I am rendering you the utmost assistance by sending him.

PRINCESS U. I feel, your Majesty, that he will not disappoint you.

[*Enter* YOUNG MAN *dressed as a Knight*.]

QUEEN G. Now our young man looks like a Knight.

PRINCESS U. He is my Knight who will, I am sure, succeed in all he undertakes.

QUEEN G. As he has as yet no name we will call him the Red Cross Knight, and may all he does prosper him ! And now, after suitable refreshment, you may set out, and I wish you Godspeed in your adventure !

PRINCESS U. Your Majesty leaves me her humble servant.

RED CROSS KNIGHT. May I always do credit to your Majesty, and one day be a fitting companion of your Majesty's Knights !

[*After this each bows in turn, and leaves the stage,* PRINCESS UNA *followed by the* RED CROSS KNIGHT *and the* DWARF.]

SCENE II. *A woodland path.*

[*From one side enter the* KNIGHT (*now called by Una, St. George*), UNA *and the* DWARF.

From the other side of the stage enters the wicked MAGICIAN.]

ST. GEORGE [*to* MAGICIAN]. Good-morrow, dear sir. Can you give us any news of the country around ?

MAGICIAN. Ah, my dear son ! how should I, a poor old man that lives in a lonely cell all day, be able to say what is going on in the land ? But this I can tell you. There is a strange man who comes into these parts, and lays waste all the country far and near.

ST. GEORGE. Such a man I should like to find, and, if you will show me where he is, I will reward you. It would be a disgrace to me, as a Knight, to let such a man live.

MAGICIAN. He dwells far from here, in a desert place, a place which no one can pass through without meeting with great dangers.

UNA [*to* ST. GEORGE]. It is getting dark, Sir Knight, and you are still weary with your late fight. Take rest to-night, and begin this fresh work with a new day.

MAGICIAN. Sir Knight, this is good advice; come with me, and rest for the night in my cell.

ST. GEORGE. As my Lady Una wishes it we will spend a night with you in your house.

[*Exit* ST. GEORGE, UNA *and the* DWARF.]

SCENE III. *Next morning outside the hut of the wicked* MAGICIAN.

MAGICIAN. I regret to have to inform you, Sir Knight, that the Lady Una has gone away. She does not care for you at all, nor for the noble deeds you wish to do. She is not a good woman, and does not mean to go any further with you.

ST. GEORGE. You amaze me. I cannot understand at all why the Lady Una should have left me. It was she who chose me from among all the Knights of Queen Gloriana.

MAGICIAN [*pointing to wings*]. There, over the brow of the hill, is Lady Una, which proves to you that I do not speak falsely.

ST. GEORGE. It certainly looks like Lady Una, although at that long distance it is impossible to tell her. Would you be so kind as to ask my dwarf to prepare for the road ?

[*Exit* MAGICIAN. ST. GEORGE *buckles on his sword. Re-enter* MAGICIAN.]

MAGICIAN. All is ready, Sir Knight. Your dwarf and palfrey await you.

[*Exit* ST. GEORGE.]

[*The* MAGICIAN *rubs his hands together in a gesture of being well satisfied with himself. Enter* LADY UNA.]

LADY UNA. Tell me, my dear Magician, if St. George is yet astir.

MAGICIAN. My dear Lady Una, St. George has tired of his quest, and has set off again on one of his own adventures. See ! on yonder hill top you can see him.

LADY UNA. This is most strange. I cannot understand his change of mind. He promised faithfully to discharge the duties which Queen Gloriana laid on him. I must try to overtake him.

MAGICIAN. That, I am afraid, will be impossible. He rides well, your St. George.

LADY UNA. I must set out at once. It is indeed most strange that he should leave me thus alone, helpless, and in a strange land. Farewell!

[*Exit* LADY UNA, *with the* MAGICIAN *following*.]

CURTAIN

It is suggested that the further adventures of Una and the Red Cross Knight should be dramatized by the children.

There are no performing fees for this play.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The story of St. George, who is the special Patron of Chivalry, and the "tutelary" or protecting Saint of England, contains much less history than legend, and although he is venerated both in the East and West of Europe, the knowledge we have of the facts of his life is very limited indeed.

In the *Acta Sanctorum*, it is stated that he was born of noble Christian parents in Cappadocia, became a distinguished soldier, and suffered for the Faith in the general persecution of the Christians throughout the Roman Empire under the Emperor Diocletian (*b.* 245 A.D.; *d.* 313), being tortured and put to death at Nicomedia (the capital of Bithynia in Asia Minor, on the shores of the Sea of Marmora), April 23rd, 303.

The famous story of St. George's struggle with the Dragon is first found in the *Legenda Aurea*, and further details are given in a ballad in *Percy's Reliques*. According to Percy, St. George was the son of Lord Albert of Coventry. His mother died when he was born, and the baby was stolen away by the "Lady of the Woods," who brought him up, and taught him to be skilful in deeds of arms. His body had three marks on it—a Dragon on the breast, a Garter round one of the legs, and a blood-red Cross on the arm.

The "Legenda" adds that when he grew to manhood, he first fought against the Saracens, and then went to Sylene, a city of Lybia. Here was a stagnant lake infested by a huge Dragon, whose poisonous breath slew many, and whose hide neither spear nor sword could pierce. The inhabitants were obliged to give him two sheep every day to keep him from doing them harm, but at last, when the sheep were nearly all done, a law was made that the people should give him the youth, the gentlefolk, and the infants of all rank, lots being cast daily for the one to be taken; and so he was fed until the lot fell upon the King's daughter, Sabra. She was tied to a stake and left there to be devoured, when St. George came up and vowed to deliver her. On came the Dragon; after a fierce battle, St. George thrust his lance into the creature's mouth, and killed it on the spot.

The King of Morocco and the King of Egypt were both unwilling that Sabra should marry a Christian, so they captured St. George and sent him to Persia, asking the King to kill him. He was put into prison, but managed to escape, and carried off Sabra, who became his wife. They came to England, and lived happily together at Coventry for many years.

It will be noticed from the above brief summary of the usually accepted legend of the Saint, that Spenser has made his own details. The "Faerie Queene" is an allegory, and as the author explains, in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, "expounding his whole intention," the Red Cross Knight expresses *holiness;* Una, *truth;* the Dwarf, *prudence;* Archimago, *hypocrisy;* Sans-Foy, *faithlessness;* Duessa, *false religion;* the Blind Woman, *superstition;* Sans-Loy, *lawlessness;* the Lion, *honour;* Prince Arthur, *virtue*, the pattern of Knighthood; and Gloriana, *glory*, as set forth in Queen Elizabeth. The Dragon is regarded in most Christian countries as symbolical of *evil* in an active form.

Those who would like to read the original of the incidents given in this little book, will find them in Book I of the "Faerie Queene": Our Chaps. I, II, and III in *Canto* 1; Chap. IV—*Canto* 2; Chaps. V and VI—*Canto* 3; Chaps. VII and VIII—*Canto* 6; Chap. IX—*Canto* 7; Chaps. X, XI and XII—*Cantos* 8 and 10; Chap. XII—*Cantos* 11 and 12.

QUESTIONS

Chapter I On what condition did Una agree to accept the youth as her knight, and what difference did the armour make to his appearance ?

Chapter II Describe the adventure of St. George in the cave in the forest.

Chapter III Tell me how St. George and Una were separated ?

Chapter IV What do you know of (*a*) Sans-Loy ; (*b*) Duessa ?

Chapter V How was it that Una came to have a lion for her companion, and how did he help her ?

Chapter VI Describe the fight between Archimago and Sans-Loy.

Chapter VII How did Una escape from Sans-Loy ?

Chapter VIII When did Una once more see Archimago, and what did he tell her this time about St. George ?

Chapter IX What bad news did Una learn from the Dwarf, when she met him wandering alone ?

Chapter X Describe the appearance and dress of Prince Arthur.

Chapter XI Tell me how Giant Pride met his death.

Chapter XII Where did Prince Arthur discover St. George, and in what state was he ?

Chapter XIII Describe in your own words the appearance of the dragon which St. George had to fight.

Chapter XIV How did the King and Queen welcome St. George, after the dragon was slain ?

Chapter XV Describe, as clearly as you can, the way in which the Union Jack is built up.

When you have read through the little play continue it.

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