



BLAKE'S RETIREMENT.

E. B.—“OH, I SAY, CARTWRIGHT, MAKE MY EXCUSES TO THE PARTY, WILL YOU, LIKE A GOOD FELLOW?”

ST. GEORGE'S DAY.

THE 23rd of April is the anniversary of England's patron saint. It is a little singular that although a patron saint he does not appear to have had any patronymic. His origin is said by Gibbon to have been “obscure,” but as this phrase was often used by the journalists of that period in speaking of their rivals of whose circulation and advertising they were jealous, it does not necessarily infer gross misconduct on George's part. Moreover, Mr. Gibbon had a prejudice against saints. George's somewhat singular tastes in the matter of nativity were shown by the fact that he was born in a fuller's shop. Ordinary people would have preferred to make their advent in an emptier shop, but in this respect George exhibited an individuality of character which shortly enabled him to rise above the culpable obscurity which enshrouded his earlier years. “Hoping by strict attention to business to merit a share of public patronage,” to quote the circular which he distributed extensively at the time, he went into business on his own account in his native city of Epiphania. Making himself solid with the heelers of his party he secured a contract for furnishing the army with bacon, and as a result speedily achieved wealth. The Grits of that period charged him with corruption, but that may possibly have been a campaign lie. He was notoriously fond of killing dragons with a spear, and

riding over their prostrate bodies; and an instantaneous photograph of him, which has been preserved, depicts George bestriding a white horse rearing on its hind legs after the fashion of King William III's charger at the battle of the Boyne, with a spear in his (George's) hands with which he is endeavoring to penetrate the dragon's scaly armour. He was wont to observe in his lighter moods that he had risen above his original *spear*. George's strong point was not humor, and this is believed to be the nearest approach to a joke that he ever indulged in.

From his fondness for the sport of dragon-slaying, a horrible suspicion obtained currency that he utilized the carcasses of the monsters for filling his pork contracts. The army having a prejudice against dragon meat on account of its toughness and somewhat brimstonery flavor, a prosecution was instituted against George, whereupon he jumped his bail and fled to Egypt. He turned his attention to theology and became an Arian, in which capacity he speedily attained a widespread popularity, and rose to be Archbishop of Alexandria and undertook to boss the whole community. Being a man of modern, progressive views, he saw that all Alexandria wanted to encourage native industry and create a boom in real estate was the imposition of more taxes. Not satisfied with pew rents, collections, marriage fees and the exemption of Church property from taxation, he increased his revenue by