

enemies; that when the Emperor Diocletian, in whose army he served, began to persecute the Christians, he went to see the Emperor, told him that he was a Christian and begged him not to go on with the persecution. When the Emperor would not listen, he resigned from the army, and was at once taken and put to death with cruel tortures because he would not deny his faith nor help to persecute his fellow-Christians. He died on April 23rd, 303, and for hundreds of years his anniversary has been kept, and he has been remembered as a true Christian soldier, too brave to save himself from suffering and death by being false or cruel. His death reminds us that goodness and right will always conquer, for though the Emperor could kill him, he could not make him do what he knew was wrong.

But, you may ask, what has St. George to do with England. Well, in the time of the third Crusade, Richard Cœur de Lion, who, you remember, was a great soldier, was fighting to get the Holy places in Palestine away from the people who were not Christians. He believed that St. George, to whom he prayed, helped him to win a battle, and after this, English people honored St. George particularly. In the year 1222, it was ordered that the 23rd of April should be kept as a national festival, and in the reign of Edward III., there was instituted the "Most Noble Order of the Garter" to which many great people belong, the King being at the head, and which is dedicated to St. George, of Capadocia, and St. Edward the Confessor. Ever since then St. George has been considered England's patron saint.

But what about the dragon? We sometimes see pictures of St. George on horseback, killing a dragon with his lance. Sometimes he is shown standing with one foot on the conquered beast, and sometimes he is alone, and leaning upon a shield which bears the red cross that we know so well on our flag as St. George's cross. In all these pictures and in the many legends that are told about St. George and the Dragon there is a meaning that is worth our study.

The cross is the emblem of Christianity, and the dragon means sin. So when we see the picture of the Red Cross Knight, as St. George is sometimes called, slaying the dragon, we remember first, how from its earliest days Christianity has been fighting against and overcoming evil ways all over the world; and then how every one of Christ's soldiers has his or her own dragon of sinful thoughts, wicked tempers and wrong habits, to struggle against and conquer.

One of the old stories that are told about the killing of the dragon runs like this:

Once upon a time in a certain old city, the people

were in great trouble and fear about a horrible great dragon who lived outside the walls, and carried off their sheep and cattle. His breath was poisonous and killed people who went near him; so to keep him away they offered him two sheep every day. When the sheep were all gone the people had to give their children instead, and each morning two children were chosen by lot. The king of the city had one daughter, a very beautiful girl named Cleodolinda. One day the lot fell upon her. Her father could not bear to give her up, and he was willing to pay all his gold and treasures for some other child to be offered in her place. But the people were angry and said, "Is it fair to take our children from us to save the city when you will not give up your own child?" So the poor father had to give up his daughter, and after eight days of mourning, the little princess was dressed in royal robes and brought out. She said that she was ready to die for the sake of the other people, and when she had received her father's blessing, she was put outside the gate amid the tears of all the citizens. As she walked along to the dragon's dwelling, she saw the bones of the other poor victims in the path and she wept bitterly.

But just now St. George came by on horseback, and when he saw the beautiful princess in such sorrow, he asked her why she wept. When she told him, he said, "Fear not, I will deliver you!" But she answered, "O noble youth, tarry not here, lest thou perish with me! Fly, I pray you!" But St. George would not; he said, "God forbid that I should fly! Through the power of Jesus Christ I will deliver you."

At that moment they saw the dragon coming towards them, half crawling, half flying. Though the princess was terribly frightened, she cried out, "Fly, I pray thee, brave knight, and leave me here to die!"

But St. George rode toward the dragon, calling on the name of the Redeemer. After a long and hard struggle, he pinned the dragon to the earth with his lance. Then he called the princess to bring him her girdle, and he bound the dragon fast with it and gave the end of it into the hand of the princess. Then they went back to the city, the dragon quite subdued and crawling after them.

The people were very much afraid when they saw them coming; but St. George called out, "Do not fear; only believe in the God who has helped me to conquer this enemy, and be baptized, and I will destroy the dragon before your eyes."

So the king and all his people believed in God and were baptized. Then St. George killed the dragon and cut off his head. And the king gave the knight great rewards and treasures; but he gave all to the poor and