

THE
NOVA-SCOTIA ALMANACK.

ST. GEORGE.

THE twenty-third day of April is sacred to George, one of the seven champions of Christendom, and the tutelar saint of England; a knight-errant who was celebrated for many marvellous feats of chivalry, one of which was his desperate combat with a dreadful, fiery, flying dragon, covered with impenetrable scales, like the monsters of the Nile. In this encounter George like to have met with his match, and might have said, as England's modern champion did of Buonaparte at Waterloo, that he "never came so near getting beaten" in all his life. The dragon, not to speak irreverently, was a deuce of a fellow, and the saint had a hard tug to overcome him. But he fixed him at last, and pinned him to the earth with a spear, as any one who doubts the truth of the story may be convinced, if he is lucky enough to obtain a little coin, called a sovereign, on which is a striking and correct representation of the combat, with the death of the dragon, "drawn from life."

The following account of the marvellous exploit of this saint is from the "Legenda Aurea" of William Caxton. The only alteration is, that we have modernized the spelling; the diction remains the same.

St. George was a knight, born at Cappadocia. On a time, he did come into the Province of Lybia, to a city which is said (called) Sy-lene; and by this city was a pool or pond like a sea, wherein was a dragon which envenomed all the country; and the people of the city gave to him every day two sheep to feed him; and when the sheep failed there was taken a man and a sheep. Then was an ordinance made in the town, that there should be taken the children and young people of them of the town by lot; and that it so happened, the lot fell upon the king's daughter; whereat the king was very sorry, and said, "For the love of God, take gold and silver, and all that I have, and let me have my daughter; and the people said, How, Sir, you that have made and ordained the law, and our children be now dead, and now you would do the contrary? Your daughter shall be given, or else we shall burn you and your hold." When the king saw that he might no more do, he began to weep, and returned to the people, and demanded eight days' respite; and when the eight days' respite were passed, then did the king array his daughter like as she should be wedded, and led her to the place where the dragon was. When she was there, St. George passed by and demanded of the lady, what she made there; and she said, "Go your ways, fair young man, that you perish not also." The legend then relates that the dragon appeared, and St. George upon his horse, bore himself against the dragon, and smote him with his spear, and threw him to the ground, and delivered the young lady to her father, who was baptized, and all his people. It says further, that St. George was afterwards beheaded by order of the Emperor Dacian, in the year of our Lord 287; and concludes,—"This blessed holy martyr, Saint George, is patron of all this kingdom of England, and the cry of men of war; in the worship (honor) of whom is founded the noble order of the Garter, and also a noble college in the castle of Windsor, by kings of England; in which college is the heart of Saint George,