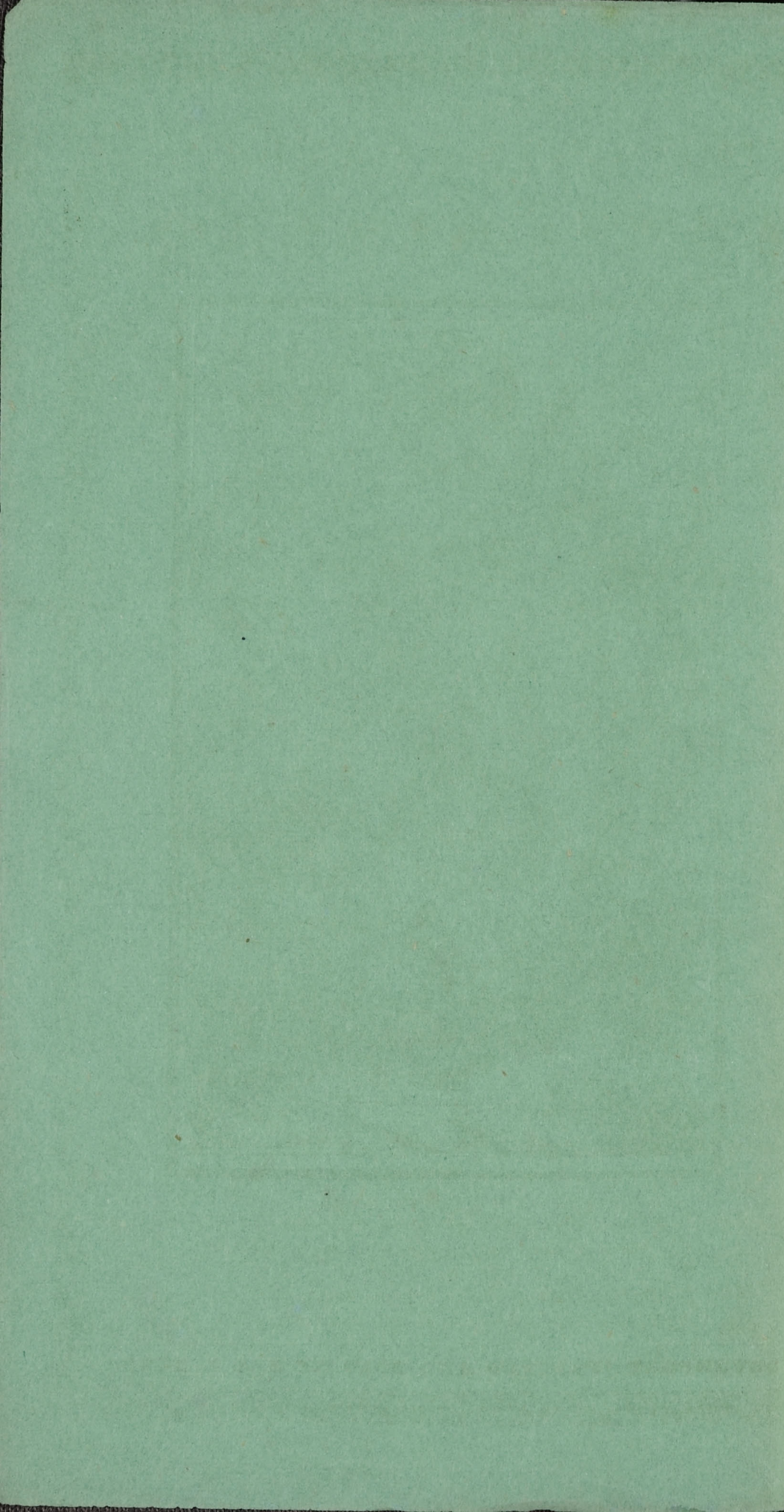


THE SURPRISING ADVENTURES OF
THE SEVEN CHAMPIONS
OF
CHRISTENDOM.



A fiery dragon, whose infectious breath
Had spread o'er Egypt pestilence and death,
The brave St. George of England dared to meet,
Nor feared the fatal danger of defeat!
Boldly he rush'd up to the hideous beast,
And plung'd his trusty sword into its breast.

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THE
SEVEN CHAMPIONS

OF

CHRISTENDOM.



IN the remote ages of the world, when enchanters committed all sorts of cruelties, an oracle declared that seven champions would arise in Christendom, whose renown for valiant deeds should resound throughout the earth. The 1st was St. Dennis of France; the 2nd, St. James of Spain; the 3rd, St. Anthony of Italy; the 4th, St. Andrew of Scotland; the 5th, St. Patrick of Ireland; the 6th, St. David of Wales; and the 7th, and most renowned, the valiant St. George of England.

Calyba, a powerful enchantress, dispatched the evil spirits under her command to steal six of these heroes, while in their cradles, and bring them to her brazen castle. St. George, who was born in Coventry, and son to the lord high steward of England, she determined to secure, for she was greatly afraid of him, St. George having, at the time of his birth, the marks of a green dragon on his breast, a red cross on his right arm, and a golden garter on his left leg.

Calyba, entering the nursery, bore away the lovely babe, leaving his distracted parents to die of grief.

Calyba detained these youths in her castle till they grew to be men; when the beauty of St. George's person so won upon the enchantress, that she resolved to exert all her arts to induce him to marry her.

One day she led him into a lofty stable, as magnificent as a palace. In seven stalls, made of cedar wood, inlaid with silver, stood seven of the most beautiful horses. One of them, finer than the rest, Calyba presented to St. George. The name of this horse was Bucephalus, the famous horse of Alexander the Great. She then conducted him into a fine armoury, where she buckled a beautiful corslet on his breast, placed a helmet, with a lofty plume of waving feathers, upon his head, and gave him a fine tempered sword. St. George, thus armed for conquest, looked so handsome, that Calyba knew no bounds to her admiration; and putting into his hand the silver wand, with which she performed all her enchantments, she told him to use her power as he pleased. St. George, detesting the practices of Calyba, received the wand with

pleasure, and when Calyba had retired to a cave in a rock, to feast upon the bodies of murdered infants, he waved the wand three times, when the rock closed on the wicked enchantress for ever.

He then departed, in company with the six champions, towards Coventry, and erected a magnificent monument to the memory of his parents.

Early in the ensuing spring, the seven heroes bade each other farewell, and took every one a different road, in quest of adventures. St. George travelled to Egypt, a country reduced to a most calamitous situation, by a tremendous fiery dragon, which tainted the air with his infectious breath, in such a manner, that a pestilence raged all over the land. The King then made a proclamation, that if any valiant knight would slay the fiery dragon, he should marry the princess royal, and succeed to the sovereignty of Egypt.

St. George resolved to fight the dragon, but no sooner had he reached the cave, than the dragon set upon him: St. George's spear was shivered to pieces, and he was thrown from his horse. He then drew his sword, and soon felled his enemy. The dragon then spread out his wings to fly away; but St. George, seeing a vulnerable part, immediately stabbed him to the heart. The monster expired, and the victor went in triumph to the palace.

The King of Morocco then sent twelve armed men to assassinate him. But St. George soon put them to flight, and was received most graciously by the princess Sabra, who presented him with a diamond ring as a token of her affection.

The King of Morocco, although thwarted in the plan he had devised for the destruction of St. George—a plan in which he had the utmost confidence, as he could not for a moment conceive that it was possible for St. George to withstand the power of twelve such valiant men as he had selected to put him to death—still felt an unquenchable desire to be the instrument of St. George's overthrow. In order to put this instrumentality in force, he bethought himself of a scheme to inflame the breast of the King of Egypt with an hatred against St. George no less deadly than that which reigned in his own heart. Accordingly he persuaded the King that St. George was an enemy to the Egyptian religion, and that he would certainly endeavour to establish the Christian Doctrine, and that the consequent results would be the entire upsetting of the peace and good order of his whole dominions; that devastation and bloodshed would ensue; that he would be dethroned, and doubtlessly become the object of inveterate rage. The King of Egypt knew not how to proceed; he could not doubt the veracity of so distinguished a personage as the King of Morocco, and, therefore resolved to annul his intentions respecting St. George. The Egyptian King could not, however, in consideration of the praiseworthy deed St. George had accomplished in destroying the dragon, which had restored health, cheerfulness, and felicity to his people, believe him to be so base a man as represented by the sovereign of Morocco; he, therefore, would not order the punishment of death (which is the law of the country for such an offence as that with which St. George was charged) to be put into execution upon the hero,

the king considering that if he was slain within his territories, of which he might justly term him the saviour, no one else having fortitude sufficient to attack the monster which by his boldness had become extinct, his death might be attended with an irremediable curse upon the country; but despatched him with a letter to the Sultan of Persia, desiring that prince to put the bearer to death.

St. George departed with the letter: on his arrival in Persia, he, to his astonishment, was made prisoner, and put into a deep dungeon. Two hungry and fierce lions were then put into the dungeon; but St. George, praying to heaven for strength, burst his bonds, and finding an old broken sword in the corner of the dungeon, he laid both the lions dead at his feet.

The sultan was astonished at his prowess, but spared his life, resolving to detain him in close confinement, where we shall leave him at present, to follow the other Champions of Christendom.

St. Dennis of France travelled into Arabia, and being, one day, very weary, sat down under a mulberry tree; being very hungry, he plucked some of the fruit; but scarcely had he tasted it, when he was suddenly transformed into a stag. This dreadful change filled him with great anxiety; he lifted up his eyes to heaven, imploring relief; he cast himself on the grass in despair. His faithful horse seemed to pity his unfortunate master, and even tore down some branches from the neighbouring trees, to shield him from the heat.

In this manner seven years passed away; at last St. Dennis's horse climbed a steep rock, and brought down in his mouth three full blown roses.

He immediately ate one of them, and in a few minutes was restored to his proper shape. He was returning thanks to heaven for his deliverance, when a plaintive voice issued from a mulberry tree, entreating for liberty; St. Dennis, at one blow, felled the tree to the ground, when a beautiful lady appeared, a daughter of the King of Thessaly, whom a magician had confined in the tree. St. Dennis placed her behind him, conveyed her to the court of Thessaly.

St. James of Spain meanwhile, passing into Sicily, had a dreadful combat with a fiery griffin; it lasted seven nights, and at last he proved victorious. He then travelled to Jerusalem. At the time of his arrival the trumpets were sounding, and the king and his nobles were preparing to hunt with wild beasts, and a magnificent reward was to be given to him who should kill the first boar.

St. James instantly rode to the forest, and before the king and his nobles arrived he had slain one of the largest boars that had ever been seen. The king praised him greatly, and was about to give him a reward, when, hearing he was a Christian, he sentenced him to die. He was to be shot by a virgin.

The Spanish champion was bound to a tree, but all the virgins refused to become his executioner. The princess royal, in particular, was so sensibly affected by his bravery, that she implored her father to revoke his cruel sentence. The king yielded to her request, but solemnly protested that he should be put to death if he should again enter Palestine. The princess unbound St. James, and presented him with a valuable diamond ring. He afterwards quitted the dominions of the Inexorable King.

After riding some miles, he dismounted to rest in a forest, and then began to think he should not have deserted a princess who had saved his life. He accordingly returned in disguise, and was taken into the service of the princess, and discovering himself at a convenient opportunity, the two lovers fled into Spain.

Meantime St. Anthony of Italy journeyed onward till he came to a strong castle, inhabited by a giant whom no man durst encounter. In this castle were seven daughters of the King of Thrace, six of whom were changed into swans, and the other was obliged to sing the enchanter to sleep. St. Anthony slew the giant, and returned to Thrace to tell the king respecting the captivity of his seven daughters.

St. Andrew of Scotland, in the course of his travels, came at last to this castle, and found the King of Thrace calling upon his gods in behalf of his princesses. He told the king if he would embrace Christianity they should be restored to their own forms. Enraged at this proposal, he commanded his knights to attack the stranger; but he performed prodigies of valour, and soon compelled all to submit; the king consenting to call upon the Christian's God, the princesses were restored to their former shape. The king returned to his palace, and the six princesses set out to follow St. Andrew.

These princesses travelled to Ireland, where they met with thirty cruel satyrs, who brutally ill-treated them. St. Patrick, being in that part of the country, heard their cries, and falling upon the satyrs with resistless fury, he slew many of them, and compelled the rest to fly. He then assisted them in finding the champion of Scotland.

St. David of Wales went to Tartary, but happening to slay the Emperor's son in a tournament, he was sent to an enchanted garden, to bring the head of Ormandine, an enchanter. He there found a sword fastened to a rock, inscribed, "He that can lift me up shall conquer all." He seized the sword, but in a moment fell by enchantment into a profound sleep.

St. George of England, after seven years' confinement, broke out of his dungeon, and arrived at the garden of Ormandine. He perceived the sword, and pulled it up, when the castle instantly vanished, and the enchanter was carried away by the furies. St. David being released, set out for Tartary, and St. George went to Barbary in search of his beloved Sabra.

St. George on his arrival put on a hermit's gown, and mixed with the poor people who were receiving alms from the beautiful Sabra. He contrived, when his turn came to be relieved, to slip the diamond ring into her hand. She instantly knew him, and the same evening contrived to escape from the palace, and joined our champion, accompanied by a Moorish servant. They travelled until they came to a forest, and being faint and hungry, St. George left his lady under the protection of her servant, and went into the forest to kill a deer. Upon his return he found the Moor torn to pieces by two lions, and the animals asleep in Sabra's lap. He boldly slew them, and then made a repast of his venison.

St. George and his lady proceeded to Constantinople. Here they met the other six champions of Christendom, who also had arrived at Constantinople with their beautiful ladies. They joined in combat with the knights of Greece, Hungary,

and Bohemia. The last day of the tournaments, St. George entered the field on a beautiful steed, most superbly attired. He overthrew all opposed to him, and was crowned with the garland of victory.

The christian heroes and their ladies now quitted Constantinople, and repaired to their own countries, where they were received as miracles of valour. The ensuing spring they raised an army of 50,000 men, to war against the Pagans, who also had raised an immense army to oppose them, but quarreling among themselves, they combated with such terrible fury, that the rivers ran with blood.

St. George arrived with the army on the frontiers of Egypt: but the monarch of that country, accompanied by his nobles, soon made their submission, and implored mercy. St. George forgave the king, on condition that he and his nobles became christians; and that St. George and Sabra should succeed to the throne.

But news was brought that Sabra, who had been left in England, was condemned to be burnt at a stake, unless some champion should appear to espouse her cause against her accuser, the Baron of Chester.

St. George transferred the command of the army to St. David, and sailed for England with expedition.

Meanwhile the dreadful day of Sabra's execution arrived, and no champion had appeared to vindicate her innocence. The King, seated on the throne, caused the heralds to summon her accuser. The defendant was then summoned by sound of trumpet, but no person appeared, and orders were given to kindle the funeral pile.

At this moment a banner of defiance was seen waving in the air, and St. George rode forward, demanding the liberty of the princess, or to combat in her defence.

The charge was sounded and the combatants engaged. Their spears were at the first onset shivered to pieces, and both horses and men were thrown to the ground. The Baron of Chester leaping up, struck so furious with his falchion, that he cleft St. George's shield asunder: but the noble champion, in his rage, smote off the Baron's right arm, so that he sank to the earth, and expired with a terrible groan. The beauteous princess was relieved from her peril, and St. George embarked with her for Greece, and afterwards travelled towards Persia. Having crossed the mountains, they entered a country where all the trees were withered, the fruits spoiled, and the houses deserted. But at last they came to a fine pavilion, where sat a beautiful virgin, with several others seated around her, all in deep affliction. St. George addressed the one who, by her diadem, appeared to be the superior, and inquired the cause of her dejection. The fair lady replied, "Brave knight, I am Queen of the Amazons, and because I refused to marry a wicked necromancer, he has raised an enchanted castle out of the earth, filled with spirits, and has destroyed my country."

The brave St. George assured the Queen he would venture his life to finish the enchantment, and recommending Sabra to her care, he rode towards the castle. He entered the castle, when he was opposed by a monstrous giant. He boldly fought the monster, and smote him to the ground, and was about to strike off his head,

when the giant promised to reveal the secret of the enchantment. He said that in a cave, below the foundation of the castle, there was a magical fire springing out of the earth, which occasioned the desolation of the Amazonian country, and it could only be quenched by a fountain of black water, that was guarded by a host of evil spirits.

St. George descended a dark flight of stairs. On opening a door at the bottom, there issued out smoke and an intolerable heat that almost stifled him; but when the smoke dispersed, he perceived a fire spouting out of the earth. Close by he beheld the water guarded by several ugly fiends, who desperately assaulted him. He drove them away, and taking up some water in his shield, extinguished the fire; upon which the castle vanished amidst a storm of thunder and lightning, and the sun appeared with unusual splendour. He then returned to the pavilion, and spent several days with the Queen in festivity, and afterwards resumed his journey.

After many difficulties they arrived in Egypt, and were crowned King and Queen of that country.

The six champions were fighting against the Persian Sultan, who was assisted by the necromancer, Osmond; but the banner of the cross was displayed, and the Persians were driven from the field of battle.

Osmond then raised an enchanted pavilion, and transformed several hideous spirits into the forms of beautiful virgins, to ensnare the six champions; but St. George rushed into the pavilion, cut it into pieces with his sword, and the spirits vanished with a terrible noise. Osmond, the enchanter, was bound to a withered

tree with fetters of adamant: his magical power left him, and he remained mourning and gnawing his flesh, till some evil spirits carried him off in a storm of thunder and lightning.

After completing the conquest of Persia, and extirpating those detestable pests of mankind, the champions returned to their respective countries, and were received with that estimation due to their exalted characters; resting from their glorious labours; after their deaths, their names were enrolled among those of the saints of Christendom.



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