



DRAGONS AND DRAGON LORE

ERNEST INGERSOLL

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BY
ERNEST INGERSOLL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN
PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL
HISTORY

"THERE'S NO SUCH THING IN NATURE, AND YOU'LL DRAW
A FAULTLESS MONSTER WHICH THE WORLD NE'ER SAW."

1928

Dragons and Dragon Lore By Ernest Ingersoll.

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water, and the maiden, all trembling, cried again-- "Fly! fly! Sir knight." His only answer was the sign of the Cross. Then he advanced to meet the horrible fiend, recommending himself to God; and brandishing his lance he transfixed the beast and cast it to the ground. Turning to the princess he bade her pass her girdle about the creature's prostrate body and to fear nothing. When this had been done the monster followed her like a docile hound. When they together had led it into the town the people fled before them, but George recalled them, bidding them put aside their fear, for the Lord had sent him to deliver them from their danger. Then the king and all his people, twenty thousand men with all their women and children, were baptized, and George smote off the head of the dragon.

Somehow, centuries ago, the people of Britain came to believe that this happened in England at Coventry; and it is no wonder that they learned and sang a Paean of victory over it, comparing George's superlative bravery with the great deeds of bygone heroes. You may find it in Bishop Percy's Reliques, and one stanza will give you the spirit of it

Baris conquered Ascapart, and after slew the boare,
 And then he crossed the seas beyond to combat with the Moore.
 Sir Isenbras and Eglamore, they were knights most bold,
 And good Sir John Mandeville of travel much hath told.
 There were many English knights that Pagans did convert,
 But St. George, St. George, pluckt out the Dragon's heart!
 St. George he was for England; St. Dennis was for France,
 Sing: Honi soit qui mal y pense!

I have traced the dragon in time from the birth of light out of darkness to the present, and in space from the Garden of Eden eastward to farthest Cathay, and westward to the crags that withstand the Atlantic's fury. I go out where I came in: There is no dragon--there never was a dragon; but wherever in the West there appeared to be one there was always a St. George.
