

St George

and

the

Cockatrice

St George he was a hero, he exterminated
pests.
He chased gorgons out of Wiltshire, killed the
harpies in their nests
and famously saved the King of Yorkshires
daughter
as she waited tied and trussed for sacrifice and
slaughter
beneath the huge ferocious jaws
of a wicked Lancastrian pterosaur.



King Arthur liked the dragons; they
filled an ecological niche.
The natural predator of the princess,
he thought them useful beasts.
Princesses there are too many and
dragons they are few
so Arthur tried to breed them in his
mythological zoo.

He had a Wyvern in the hayloft,
an Ice Wurm in the barn
and a Bas'lisk in the compost heap
tucked up safe and warm.
To the Cock'trice, he gave pride of
place;
high up on Badon Hill
where it could keep a weather watch
and see the rainstorms spill
to fill the rushing gushing streams
and pretty winding rills.

St George had his big twelve-bore tucked underneath his arm,
As he drove his tractor up the lane, towards old Arthur's farm
he approved of GM cows and Battery pigs
and the more cubic forms of sheep
He thought them very civilized, profitable and neat.

As for those beasts of more symbolic and archaic kinds
he really couldn't find the sense and didn't have the time.
St George he saw the dragons, "not modern enough" he said
as he cocked his shotgun, took his aim and blew off the Wyvern's head.
But the Cock'trice slept up a tree, tucked cosy in his bed.

St George he donned his trusty dragon-fire proof vest.
He climbed to the top of the Cock'trice pole where the beast was at rest
He had his patent anti-Cock'trice spray gripped firmly in his teeth.
From the loud and frightening snores he knew the Cock'trice was asleep.



All about lay Knightly bones and crusts of princess pie
and skulls and crowns and shopping lists and a well chewed Eton tie
and in the centre the Cock'trice lay on a campers sleeping roll
an alarm clock rang, it scratched itself and opened up an eye...
St George he dropped his poison spray aghast, in great surprise
St George he shuddered, St George he froze,
St George the silly knight forgot what every schoolchild knows;
The Cock'trice it doesn't fight with beak or claws of bone
It merely blinks its magic eye to turn you into stone.
Now in the church stands brave St George, placed high up in a hole
his armour turned to magnetite, his flesh to common coal.

Oliver Smith 2011