

ICPR SERIES ON VALUE-ORIENTED EDUCATION

Joan of Arc



General Editor
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First Published 2005
Indian Council of Philosophical Research

Published by:
INDIAN COUNCIL OF PHILOSOPHICAL RESEARCH
Darshan Bhawan
36, Tughlakabad Institutional Area
Mehrauli Badarpur Road
New Delhi 110062

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Acknowledgements

This monograph is part of a series on Value-oriented Education centered on three values: *Illumination, Heroism and Harmony*. The research, preparation and publication of the monographs that form part of this series are the result of the cooperation of the following members of the research team of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, Auroville:

Abha, Alain, Anne, Ashatit, Auralee, Bhavana, Christine, Claude, Deepti, Don, Frederick, Ganga, Jay Singh, Jean-Yves, Jossi, Jyoti Madhok, Kireet Joshi, Krishna, Lala, Lola, Mala, Martin, Mirajyoti, Namrita, Olivier, Pala, Pierre, Serge, Shailaja, Shankaran, Sharanam, Soham, Suzie, Varadharajan, Vladimir, Vigyan.

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We are grateful to many individuals in and outside Auroville who, besides the above mentioned researchers and general editor, have introduced us to various essays which are included in full or in parts in this experimental compilation.

Our special thanks to Véronique Nicolet (Auroville) for her painting which we reproduced on the cover as well as in the preface.

Cover design: Serge Brelin, Auroville Press Publishers

The Indian Council of Philosophical Research (ICPR) acknowledges with gratefulness the labor of research and editing of the team of researchers of the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research, Auroville.

Printed in Auroville Press, 2005

Illumination, Heroism and Harmony

Joan of Arc



General Editor: KIREET JOSHI

Uday - Gopi



1920 - 1921

Illumination, Heroism and Harmony

Preface .

The task of preparing teaching-learning material for value-oriented education is enormous.

There is, first, the idea that value-oriented education should be exploratory rather than prescriptive, and that the teaching-learning material should provide to the learners a growing experience of exploration.

Secondly, it is rightly contended that the proper inspiration to turn to value-orientation is provided by biographies, autobiographical accounts, personal anecdotes, epistles, short poems, stories of humour, stories of human interest, brief passages filled with pregnant meanings, reflective short essays written in well-chiselled language, plays, powerful accounts of historical events, statements of personal experiences of values in actual situations of life, and similar other statements of scientific, philosophical, artistic and literary expression.

Thirdly, we may take into account the contemporary fact that the entire world is moving rapidly towards the synthesis of the East and the West, and in that context, it seems obvious that our teaching-learning material should foster the gradual familiarisation of students with global themes of universal significance as also those that underline the importance of diversity in unity. This implies that the material should bring the students nearer to their cultural heritage, but also to the highest that is available in the cultural experiences of the world at large.

Fourthly, an attempt should be made to select from Indian and world history such examples that could illustrate the theme of the upward progress of humankind. The selected research material could be multi-sided, and it should be presented in such a manner and in the context in which they need in specific situations that might obtain or that can be created in respect of the students.

The research team at the Sri Aurobindo International Institute of Educational Research (SAIIER) has attempted the creation of the relevant teaching-learning material, and they have decided to present the same in the form of monographs. The total number of these monographs will be around eighty to eighty-five.

It appears that there are three major powers that uplift life to higher and higher normative levels, and the value of these powers, if well illustrated, could be effectively conveyed to the learners for their upliftment. These powers are those of illumination, heroism and harmony.

It may be useful to explore the meanings of these terms—illumination, heroism and harmony—since the aim of these monographs is to provide material for a study of what is sought to be conveyed through these three terms. We offer here exploratory statements in regard to these three terms.

Illumination is that ignition of inner light in which meaning and value of substance and life-movement are seized, understood, comprehended, held, and possessed, stimulating and inspiring guided action and application and creativity culminating in joy, delight, even ecstasy. The width, depth and height of the light and vision determine the degrees of illumination, and when they reach the splendour and glory of synthesis and harmony, illumination ripens into wisdom. Wisdom, too, has varying degrees that can uncover powers of knowledge and action, which reveal unsuspected secrets and unimagined skills of art and craft of creativity and effectiveness.

Heroism is, essentially, inspired force and self-giving and sacrifice in the operations of will that is applied to the quest,

realisation and triumph of meaning and value against the resistance of limitations and obstacles by means of courage, battle and adventure. There are degrees and heights of heroism determined by the intensity, persistence and vastness of sacrifice. Heroism attains the highest states of greatness and refinement when it is guided by the highest wisdom and inspired by the sense of service to the ends of justice and harmony, as well as when tasks are executed with consummate skill.

Harmony is a progressive state and action of synthesis and equilibrium generated by the creative force of joy and beauty and delight that combines and unites knowledge and peace and stability with will and action and growth and development. Without harmony, there is no perfection, even though there could be maximisation of one or more elements of our nature. When illumination and heroism join and engender relations of mutuality and unity, each is perfected by the other and creativity is endless.

In Joan of Arc, we find, abundantly, illumination, heroism and harmony. Illumination, as she, in obedience to heavenly voices, embarked on her stupendous task of liberating France from the English, remaining totally faithful to her inner guidance till the end, and showing amazing capabilities as the youngest ever head of the French army. Harmony, as she tried, repeatedly, to convince the English enemy to leave France peacefully so as to avoid battles and suffering. Harmony again, as she created a beautiful atmosphere around her wherever she was, even in the army whose most brutal elements became well disciplined under her influence. She was also very compassionate with prisoners or wounded enemy soldiers, a very rare attitude in those merciless times. But she was above all supremely heroic, whether in battle as the leader who inspired or, later, when faced with judges bent on condemning her. Till the end, despite the terrible fate that awaited her, she remained fearless and faithful to her mission.



Joan of Arc

Introduction

Joan of Arc! Her story is so incredible that it looks like a fairy tale. And maybe this is what they think it must be, those who only vaguely know about her. But she is real. She did exist. She did become at seventeen—seventeen!—the commander of the royal army of France, at a time in the Middle Ages when women were strictly confined to domestic chores.

Indeed, difficult to believe. How could it happen? And, further, how could this totally inexperienced girl conduct herself creditably as the head of the army, to the extent of being accepted as their leader by tough, battle-tested veterans? In less than one year, despite avoidable delays due to the King's indecision, she won major victories and did put the English in a precarious situation from which they would never be able to recover. This is why she earned the title of Liberator of France even though she died quite a long time before the English were finally vanquished.

Such an extraordinary story, happening at a time, in the high Middle Ages, around 1430, when recording of facts was not particularly precise, could have been by now shrouded in some mystery by default of much hard evidence. But something remarkable happened, as a result, unfortunately, of the terrible fate that befell her—she was burned at the stake as heretic. We have the official records of her trial. Moreover — and, again, remarkably — she was rehabilitated thirty years later, an exceptional event which resulted in a large amount of testimonies from still live witnesses, which have been very precisely recorded.

It reads like a legend, but a legend it is not: Joan of Arc has really been that extraordinary, that exceptional being, the like of whom has not been seen before her short life and, certainly, not after.

This monograph presents extracts from a book written by the well known American writer Mark Twain. How this author's life was itself radically changed because of Joan of Arc is described in a Foreword by author Nina Rosenstein to a recent new publication of Twain's book:

More than five hundred years later, this indomitable young woman stepped out of history and changed the life of a poor, uneducated printer's apprentice named Samuel Clemens. Sam was walking home from work one gusty day in the mid-1850s when a sheet of paper swirled around his feet. To fifteen-year-old Sam, the seamier side of life in his Mississippi River town of Hannibal, Missouri—where card sharks, drunks, and hustlers roamed the waterfront—had always been much more interesting than schooling and reading. But this single page from a book about Joan of Arc was intriguing, and Sam hurried home, demanding to know whether Joan of Arc was a real person. "I had never been a reader of books," he said many years later, "but from that time I read every history I could get hold of." The voracious reader became an accomplished writer, and today we know Samuel Clemens by his pen name, Mark Twain.

The purity and clarity and force of Mark Twain's youthful adoration of Joan of Arc remained with him for the rest of his life, although it did not take literary shape until almost forty years after that first, windblown encounter. By then, Mark Twain was internationally renowned as a humorist, satirist, storyteller, and lecturer. He spent twelve years

researching the well-documented history of Joan of Arc, whom he described as “the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced.” Her story is remarkable for the amount of written historical record that exists dating back to her own century — documents, letters, transcripts from her trial.

Twain wanted to present a fair picture, so he pored over both French and English accounts and records. Even then his lifelong passion for Joan did not flow easily into his pen. “There are some books that refuse to be written ... because the right form for the story does not present itself.” Twain started the book six times before he found the right form—a memoir by an on-the-scene eyewitness, Joan of Arc’s own page and secretary, Louis de Conte. History gives us the name Louis de Conte, the real-life page who transcribed Joan of Arc’s dictated letters, accompanied her in battle, and was later called to testify at her trial. Mark Twain’s fictionalized de Conte spent his whole life with Joan—he grew up in Joan of Arc’s village of Domremy as her childhood friend and confidante, accompanied her into battle, and was with her even up to the moment of her death. Mark Twain then added yet another layer to his story—a fictitious “translator” of de Conte’s fictional memoirs. Through Louis de Conte we share the intensity of Twain’s subjective devotion to Joan of Arc, whose radiance and purity were modeled on Twain’s own beloved daughter Susy. Through the scholarly interjections of the translator, Jean Francois Alden, we confront Mark Twain’s impressive research — and more objective scholarly tone.

This "translator", as invented by Twain, offers his own devoted description of Joan in a Translator's Preface:

... the character of Joan of Arc is unique. It can be measured by the standards of all times without misgiving or apprehension as to the result. Judged by any of them, judged by all of them, it is still flawless, it is still ideally perfect; it still occupies the loftiest place possible to human attainment, a loftier one than has been reached by any other mere mortal.

When we reflect that her century was the brutallest, the wickedest, the rottenest in history since the darkest ages, we are lost in wonder at the miracle of such a product from such a soil. The contrast between her and her century is the contrast between day and night. She was truthful when lying was the common speech of men; she was honest when honesty was become a lost virtue; she was a keeper of promises when the keeping of a promise was expected of no one; she gave her great mind to great thoughts and great purposes when other great minds wasted themselves upon pretty fancies or upon poor ambitions; she was modest and fine and delicate when to be loud and coarse might be said to be universal; she was full of pity when a merciless cruelty was the rule; she was steadfast when stability was unknown, and honourable in an age which had forgotten what honour was; she was a rock of convictions in a time when men believed in nothing and scoffed at all things; she was unfailingly true in an age that was false to the core; she maintained her personal dignity unimpaired in an age of fawnings and servilities; she was of a dauntless courage when hope and courage had perished in the hearts of her nation; she was spotlessly pure in

mind and body when society in the highest places was foul in both...

The work wrought by Joan of Arc may fairly be regarded as ranking with any recorded in history, when one considers the conditions under which it was undertaken, the obstacles in the way, and the means at her disposal. Cesar carried conquest far, but he did it with the trained and confident veterans of Rome, and was a trained soldier himself ; and Napoleon swept away the disciplined armies of Europe, but he also was a trained soldier, and he began his work with patriot battalions inflamed and inspired by the miracle-working new breath of Liberty breathed upon them by the Revolution—eager young apprentices to the splendid trade of war, not old and broken men-at-arms, despairing survivors of an age-long accumulation of monotonous defeats ; but Joan of Arc, a mere child in years, ignorant, unlettered, a poor village girl unknown and without influence, found a great nation lying in chains, helpless and hopeless under an alien domination, its treasury bankrupt, its soldiers disheartened and dispersed, all spirit torpid, all courage dead in the hearts of the people through long years of foreign and domestic outrage and oppression, their King cowed, resigned to its fate, and preparing to fly the country; and she laid her hand upon this nation, this corpse, and it rose and followed her. She led it from victory to victory, she turned back the tide of the Hundred Years' War, she fatally crippled the English power, and died with the earned title of DELIVERER OF FRANCE, which she bears to this day.

With Joan of Arc, it looks as if the Spirit of the nation of France manifests itself for the first time powerfully. She saves a

dying nation, literally: the French were truly disheartened, their combative capacity lost, final defeat seemed imminent. Suddenly, miraculously, Joan appears on this disastrous scene, she seems to incarnate France, of which she speaks so tenderly, she ignites patriotic fervour in defeated men. The mere sight of her is enough to rally soldiers again and again to fight till victory is obtained. This was like the momentous birth of the French Nation which, so far, had been more like an assemblage of provinces than a unified country. Of course it will still take quite a bit of time till the French monarchs would manage to truly unify France, but the seeds of patriotism were spectacularly sown through Joan of Arc and they will blossom in due course.

Her story does evoke a mystery, the mystery of divine intervention on earth. How else to explain what happened? Nobody can explain how a young peasant-girl who hardly moved from her village could know how to place artillery most effectively, as it is said in a testimony given during the trial of her rehabilitation. It can only be that she was a transparent instrument able to receive without distortion a knowledge coming from high, far beyond her normal consciousness. She was also able to make accurate prophecies, as it is precisely recorded in the official documents. In her sublime purity, she was totally devoted to the cause of God and prepared for any sacrifice, so that His will as she perceived it may be accomplished. The whole story does not make sense unless it is indeed a play of the Spirit. Truly, Joan's story is one where one can see what is rarely to be seen in such bright light, the divine trace in human events. It is as if a gigantic current of force, coming from unfathomable depths or heights, suddenly appears at the surface of the murky flow of human affairs. If one were to ask for a proof of the existence of the Divinity, the story of Joan of Arc could be seen as being as close as it could be of a compelling proof of a Something beyond.

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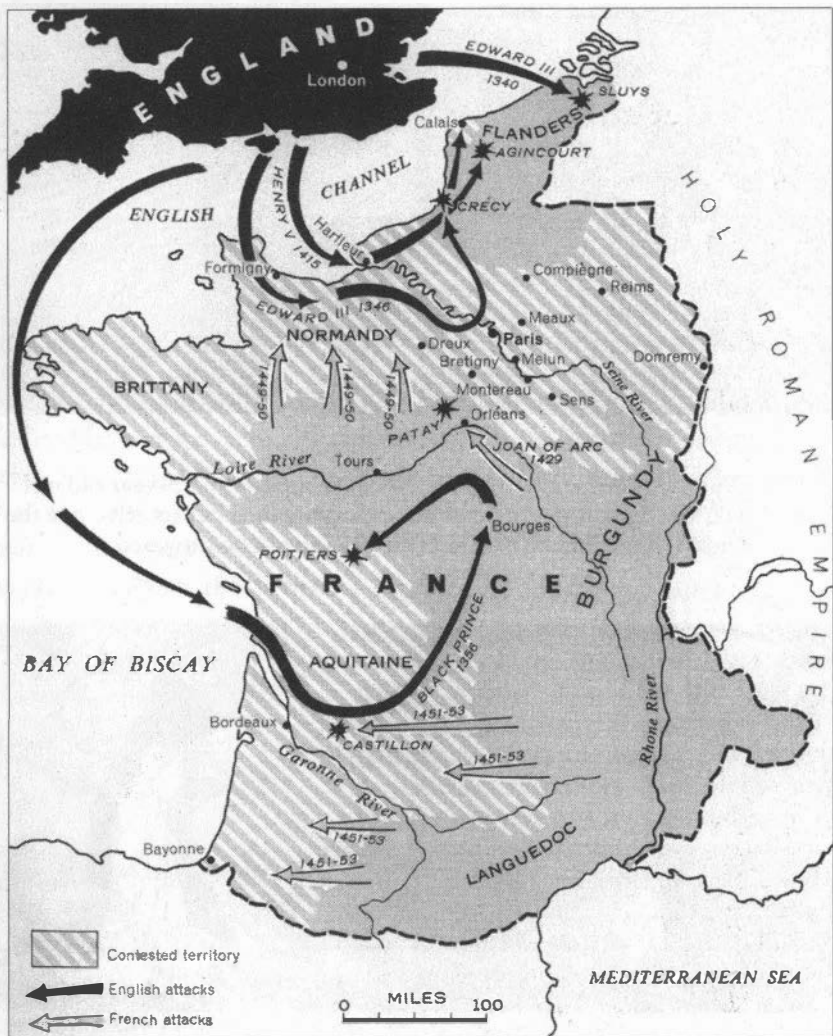
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The beginning of the story: angel St Michael appears to 13-year old girl Joan of Arc, the daughter of a peasant, and commands her to drive out the English from France and to bring the king to be crowned...



The end of the story: after leading the French armies to victory, the 19-year old Joan of Arc is condemned to death for heresy and burned at the stake.



The Hundred-year war: disputed territories and main troops movements from 1340 to 1453

Historical background

The town and castle of Chinon, on the banks of the Vienne, housed, in the first quarter of the fifteenth century, the French royal court. This was during the famous hundred-year war between France and England. The English were largely winning and a good deal of French territory was in their hand. The situation was grim, and it looked as if it would soon worsen. Orleans was under siege and would probably fall in the near future. The French king was an ungainly, cowering figure, a timid young man of poor physique, Charles VII of France, as yet uncrowned, tortured by doubts of his own legitimacy, expecting every moment to be driven even from his humble home at Chinon by the dreaded soldiers from across the Channel.

Never had a monarch of France sunk so low. The victories of the king of England Henry V, had made the English masters of all France north of the Loire, apart from the domains they already held in the south. After his death, his infant son had been proclaimed king in Paris, though he had not been anointed with the sacred oil of St. Remy which alone could make him king in the eyes of France. The great Duke of Burgundy, richer and more powerful than many monarchs, had allied himself to the invaders. In another devastating blow to Charles, his own mother, the German Isabeau, widow of the lunatic Charles VI had also given her support to the English, and had declared that her son had not a drop of the blood royal in his veins.



Charles VII, king of France

At this moment, when all seemed lost, the miracle occurred. At a time when it appeared that at last, after the French people had already suffered all the miseries of the Hundred Years War, the English claim to rule France was close to become a complete reality, the Capetian dynasty was saved by the inspiration and courage of an illiterate peasant girl.

Her name was Jeanne d'Arc, and she was born in the year 1412, the daughter of a peasant proprietor—the most influential personage of the village of Domremy, on the Meuse. She was a pious child, unable to read or write, but proud of her skill in needlework, and able to help her father with his flocks and herds. Her home was in country partly French and partly Burgundian in sympathy, and she was from her earliest years familiar with the troubles that beset her native land.

When Joan was about thirteen, according to her own testimony, she began hearing voices from heaven. During the next three years, these voices will instruct Joan about the mission that she must undertake, that is to liberate France from the English invaders and make the King to be crowned at Rheims. At the beginning, Joan, quite naturally, pleaded ignorance and incapacity to accomplish such a gigantic task but was gradually made to accept that such is God's will and that He had chosen her as His instrument.

It seemed of course a wild and fantastic notion to her companions and her parents. But Joan had made up her mind, and nothing would stop her. In 1428, when she was sixteen, she visited in his castle Robert de Baudricourt, who held the town of Vaucouleurs for the dauphin, and demanded an escort to Chinon so that she could go and see the king. Robert was flabbergasted. He was a rough, simple soldier, not a man to be impressed by such a story that St. Michael, St. Catherine and St. Margaret had appeared to a peasant maid and entrusted her with the Herculean task of freeing France from its foreign invaders. In short, he told her not to be a little fool, and sent her home.

But Joan was convinced of the genuineness of her inspiration and no initial failure would daunt her. She tried again, and this time won over some of Baudricourt's followers, with the result



Joan of Arc and Baudricourt (detail): Departure from Vaucouleurs, by French painter Scherrer (1855-1916)

that he was prevailed upon to give her the escort she demanded. In January, 1439, dressed as a man, and with six followers, the maid set out for Chinon. The extracts from Joan of Arc by Mark Twain that we present here begin with Joan and her faithful companions waiting at Chinon to be received at a royal audience.

adapted from the chapter "Jeanne d'Arc" in *100 Great Lives*,
edited by John Canning, Rupa 1984

Joan of Arc

Extracts from *Joan of Arc* by Marc Twain

Well, anything to make delay. The King's council advised him against arriving at a decision in our matter too precipitately. *He* arrives at a decision too precipitately! So they sent a committee of priests—always priests—into Lorraine to inquire into Joan's character and history—a matter which would consume several weeks, of course. You see how fastidious they were. It was as if people should come to put out the fire when a man's house was burning down, and they waited till they could send into another country to find out if he had always kept the Sabbath or not, before letting him try.

So the days poked along, dreary for us young people in some ways, but not in all, for we* had one great anticipation in front of us—we had never seen a king, and now some day we should have that prodigious spectacle to see and to treasure in our memories all our lives; so we were on the look-out, and always eager and watching for the chance. The others

* *We* : a small group of mostly young men who have accompanied Joan in her journey from Vaucouleurs to Chinon to meet the King. Among them are two brothers of Joan, Jean and Pierre d'Arc, the narrator, Louis Le Conte, childhood friend of Joan (later, her page and secretary), and two members of the nobility, Jean de Metz and Bertrand de Poulengy who were touched very early by Joan's determination and purity.

were doomed to wait longer than I, as it turned out. One day great news came—the Orleans commissioners, with Yolande and our knights, had at last turned the council's position and persuaded the King to see Joan.

Joan received the immense news gratefully but without losing her head, but with us others it was otherwise; we could not eat or sleep or do any rational thing for the excitement and the glory of it. During two days our pair of noble knights were in distress and trepidation on Joan's account, for the audience was to be at night, and they were afraid that Joan would be so paralysed by the glare of light from the long files of torches, the solemn pomps and ceremonies, the great concourse of renowned personages, the brilliant costumes, and the other splendours of the Court that she, a simple country maid, and all unused to such things, would be overcome by these terrors and make a piteous failure.

No doubt I could have comforted them, but I was not free to speak. Would Joan be disturbed by this cheap spectacle, this tinsel show, with its small King and his butterfly dukelets?—she who had spoken face to face with the princes of heaven, the familiars of God, and seen their retinue of angels stretching back into the remoteness of the sky, myriads upon myriads, like a measureless fan of light, a glory like the glory of the sun streaming from each of those innumerable heads, the massed radiance filling the deeps of space with a blinding splendour? I thought not.

Queen Yolande wanted Joan to make the best possible impression upon the King and the Court, so she was strenuous to have her clothed in the richest stuffs, wrought upon the princeliest pattern, and set off with jewels; but in that she had to be disappointed, of course, Joan not being persuadable to it, but begging to be simply and sincerely dressed, as became a servant of God, and one sent upon a mission of a serious sort and grave political import. So then the gracious Queen imagined and contrived that simple and witching costume which I have described to you so many times, and which I cannot

think of even now in my dull age without being moved just as rhythmical and exquisite music moves one; for that was music, that dress — that is what it was—music that one saw with the eyes and felt in the heart. Yes, she was a poem, she was a dream, she was a spirit when she was clothed in that.

She kept that raiment always, and wore it several times upon occasions of state, and it is preserved to this day in the Treasury of Orleans, with two of her swords, and her banner, and other things now sacred because they had belonged to her.

At the appointed time the Count of Vendôme, a great lord of the Court, came richly clothed, with his train of servants and assistants, to conduct Joan to the King, and the two knights and I went with her, being entitled to this privilege by reason of our official positions near her person.

When we entered the great audience hall, there it all was, just as I have already painted it. Here were ranks of guards in shining armour and with polished halberds; two sides of the hall were like flower-gardens for variety of colour and the magnificence of the costumes; light streamed upon these masses of colour from two hundred and fifty flambeaux. There was a wide free space down the middle of the hall, and at the end of it was a throne royally canopied, and upon it sat a crowned and sceptred figure nobly clothed and blazing with jewels.

It is true that Joan had been hindered and put off a good while, but now that she was admitted to an audience at last, she was received with honours granted to only the greatest personages. At the entrance door stood four heralds in a row, in splendid tabards, with long slender silver trumpets at their mouths, with square silken banners depending from them embroidered with the arms of France. As Joan and the Count passed by, these trumpets gave forth in unison one long rich note, and as we moved down the hall under the pictured and gilded vaulting, this was repeated at every fifty feet of our progress—six times in all. It made our good knights proud and happy, and they held themselves erect, and stiffened their stride, and looked fine and soldierly. They were not expecting



Entry of castle at Chinon

this beautiful and honourable tribute to our little country maid.

Joan walked two yards behind the Count, we three walked two yards behind Joan. Our solemn march ended when we were as yet some eight or ten steps from the throne. The Count made a deep obeisance, pronounced Joan's name, then bowed again and moved to his place among a group of officials near the throne. I was devouring the crowned personage with all my eyes, and my heart almost stood still with awe.

The eyes of all others were fixed upon Joan in a gaze of wonder which was half worship, and which seemed to say, 'How sweet—how lovely—

how divine!' All lips were parted and motionless, which was a sure sign that those people, who seldom forget themselves, had forgotten themselves now, and were not conscious of anything but the one object they were gazing upon. They had the look of people who are under the enchantment of a vision.

Then they presently began to come to life again, rousing themselves out of the spell and shaking it off as one drives away little by little a clinging drowsiness or intoxication. Now they fixed their attention upon Joan with a strong new interest of another sort; they were full of curiosity to see what she would do—they having a secret and particular reason for this curiosity. So they watched. This is what they saw:

She made no obeisance, nor even any slight inclination of her head, but stood looking toward the throne in silence. That was all there was to see, at present, I glanced up at De Metz, and was shocked at the paleness of his face. I whispered and said: 'What is it, man; what is it?'

His answering whisper was so weak I could hardly catch it:

'They have taken advantage of the hint in her letter to play a trick upon her! She will err, and they will laugh at her. That is not the King that sits there.'

Then I glanced at Joan. She was still gazing steadfastly toward the throne, and I had the curious fancy that even her shoulders and the back of her head expressed bewilderment. Now she turned her head slowly, and her eye wandered along the lines of standing courtiers till it fell upon a young man who was very quietly dressed; then her face lighted joyously, and she ran and threw herself at his feet, and clasped his knees, exclaiming in that soft melodious voice which was her birthright and was now charged with deep and tender feeling:

'God of His grace give you long life, O dear and gentle Dauphin!'

In his astonishment and exultation De Metz cried out:

'By the shadow of God, it is an amazing thing!' Then he mashed all the bones of my hand in his grateful grip, and added, with a proud shake of his mane, 'Now, what have these painted infidels to say!'

Meantime the young person in the plain clothes was saying to Joan:

'Ah, you mistake, my child, I am not the King. There he is,' and he pointed to the throne.

The knight's face clouded, and he muttered in grief and indignation:

'Ah, it is a shame to use her so. But for this lie she had gone through safe. I will go and proclaim to all the house what—'

'Stay where you are!' whispered I and the Sieur Bertrand in a breath, and made him stop in his place.

Joan did not stir from her knees, but still lifted her happy face toward the King, and said:

'No, gracious liege, you are he, and none other.'

De Metz's troubles vanished away, and he said:

'Verily, she was not guessing, she *knew*. Now, how could she know? It is a miracle. I am content, and will meddle no more, for I perceive that she is equal to her occasions, having

that in her head that cannot profitably be helped by the vacancy that is in mine.'

This interruption of his lost me a remark or two of the other talk; however, I caught the King's next question:

'But tell me who you are, and what would you?'

'I am called Joan the Maid, and am sent to say that the King of Heaven wills that you be crowned and consecrated in your good city of Rheims, and be thereafter Lieutenant of the Lord of Heaven, who is King of France. And He willeth also that you set me at my appointed work and give me men-at-arms.' After a slight pause she added, her eye lighting at the sound of her words, 'For then will I raise the siege of Orleans and break the English power!'

The young monarch's amused face sobered a little when this martial speech fell upon that sick air like a breath blown from embattled camps and fields of war, and his trifling smile presently faded wholly away and disappeared. He was grave now, and thoughtful. After a little he waved his hand lightly, and all the people fell away and left those two by themselves in a vacant space. The knights and I moved to the opposite side of the hall and stood there. We saw Joan rise at a sign, then she and the King talked privately together.

All that host had been consumed with curiosity to see what Joan would do. Well, they had seen, and now they were full of astonishment to see that she had really performed that strange miracle according to the promise in her letter; and they were fully as much astonished to find that she was not overcome by the poms and splendours about her, but was even more tranquil and at her ease in holding speech with a monarch than ever they themselves had been, with all their practice and experience.

As for our two knights, they were inflated beyond measure with pride in Joan, but nearly dumb, as to speech, they not being able to think out any way to account for her managing to carry herself through this imposing ordeal without ever a mistake or an awkwardness of any kind to mar the grace and credit of her great performance.

The talk between Joan and the King was long and earnest, and held in low voices. We could not hear, but we had our eyes and could note effects; and presently we and all the house noted one effect which was memorable and striking, and has been set down in memoirs and histories and in testimony at the Process of Rehabilitation by some who witnessed it; for all knew it was big with meaning, though none knew what that meaning was at that time, of course. For suddenly we saw the King shake off his indolent attitude and straighten up like a man, and at the same time look immeasurably astonished. It was as if Joan had told him something almost too wonderful for belief, and yet of a most uplifting and welcome nature.

It was long before we found out the secret of this conversation, but we know it now, and all the world knows it. That part of the talk was like this—as one may read in all histories. The perplexed King asked Joan for a sign. He wanted to believe in her and her mission, and that her Voices were supernatural and endowed with knowledge hidden from mortals; but how could he do this unless these Voices could prove their claim in some absolutely unassailable way? It was then that Joan said:

‘I will give you a sign, and you shall no more doubt. There is a secret trouble in your heart which you speak of to none—a doubt which wastes away your courage, and makes you dream of throwing all away and fleeing from your realm. Within this little while you have been praying, in your own breast, that God of His grace would resolve that doubt, even if the doing of it must show you that no kingly right is lodged in you.’

It was that that amazed the King, for it was as she had said: his prayer was the secret of his own breast, and none but God could know about it. So he said:

‘The sign is sufficient. I know, now, that these Voices are of God. They have said true in this matter; if they have said more, tell it me—I will believe.’

‘They have resolved that doubt, and I bring their very words, which are these: Thou art lawful heir to the King thy father, and true heir of France. God has spoken it. Now lift up

thy head, and doubt no more, but give me men-at-arms and let me get about my work.'

Telling him he was of lawful birth was what straightened him up and made a man of him for a moment, removing his doubts upon that head, and convincing him of his royal right; and if any could have hanged his hindering and pestiferous council and set him free, he would have answered Joan's prayer and set her in the field. But no, those creatures were only checked, not checkmated; they could invent some more delays.

We had been made proud by the honours which had so distinguished Joan's entrance into that place—honours restricted to personages of very high rank and worth—but that pride was as nothing compared with the pride we had in the honour done her upon leaving it. For whereas those first honours were shown only to the great, these last, up to this time, had been shown only to the royal. The King himself led Joan by the hand down the great hall to the door, the glittering multitude standing and making reverence as they passed, and the silver trumpets sounding those rich notes of theirs. Then he dismissed her with gracious words, bending low over her hand and kissing it. Always—from all companies, high or low—she went forth richer in honour and esteem than when she came.

And the King did another handsome thing by Joan, for he sent us back to Coudray Castle torch-lighted and in state, under escort of his own troop—his guard of honour—the only soldiers he had; and finely equipped and bedizened they were, too, though they hadn't seen the colour of their wages since they were children, as a body might say. The wonders which Joan had been performing before the King had been carried all around by this time, so the road was so packed with people who wanted to get a sight of her that we could hardly dig through; and as for talking together, we couldn't, all attempts at talk being drowned in the storm of shoutings and huzzas that broke out all along as we passed, and kept abreast of us like a wave the whole way.

* * *

(...) When Joan told the King what that deep secret was that was torturing his heart, his doubts were cleared away; he believed she was sent of God, and if he had been let alone he would have set her upon her great mission at once. But he was not let alone. Tremouille and the holy fox of Rheims knew their man. All they needed to say was this—and they said it:

‘Your Highness says her Voices have revealed to you, by her mouth, a secret known only to yourself and God. How can you know that her Voices are not of Satan, and she his mouth-piece?—for does not Satan know the secrets of men and use his knowledge for the destruction of their souls? It is a dangerous business, and your Highness will do well not to proceed in it without probing the matter to the bottom.’

That was enough. It shrivelled up the King’s little soul like a raisin, with terrors and apprehensions, and straightway he privately appointed a commission of bishops to visit and question Joan daily until they should find out whether her supernatural helps hailed from heaven or from hell.

The King’s relative, the Duke of Alençon, three years prisoner of war to the English, was in these days released from captivity through promise of a great ransom; and the name and fame of the Maid having reached him—for the same filled all mouths now, and penetrated to all parts—he came to Chinon to see with his own eyes what manner of creature she might be. The King sent for Joan and introduced her to the Duke. She said, in her simple fashion:

‘You are welcome; the more of the blood of France that is joined to this cause, the better for the cause and it.’

Then the two talked together, and there was just the usual result: when they parted, the Duke was her friend and advocate.

Joan attended the King's mass the next day, and afterward dined with the King and the Duke. The King was learning to prize her company and value her conversation; and that might well be, for, like other kings, he was used to getting nothing out of people's talk but guarded phrases, colourless and non-committal, or carefully tinted to tally with the colour of what he said himself; and so this kind of conversation only vexes and bores, and is wearisome; but Joan's talk was fresh and free, sincere and honest, and unmarred by timorous self-watching and constraint. She said the very thing that was in her mind, and said it in a plain, straightforward way. One can believe that to the King this must have been like fresh cold water from the mountains to parched lips used to the water of the sunbaked puddles of the plain.

After dinner Joan so charmed the Duke with her horsemanship and lance practice in the meadows by the Castle of Chinon, whither the King also had come to look on, that he made her a present of a great black war-steed.

Every day the commission of bishops came and questioned Joan about her Voices and her mission, and then went to the King with their report. These prying accomplished but little. She told as much as she considered advisable, and kept the rest to herself. Both threats and trickeries were wasted upon her. She did not care for the threats, and the traps caught nothing. She was perfectly frank and childlike about these things. She knew the bishops were sent by the King, that their questions were the King's questions, and that by all law and custom a King's questions *must* be answered; yet she told the King in her naive way at his own table one day that she answered only such of those questions as suited her.

The bishops finally concluded that they couldn't tell whether Joan was sent by God or not. They were cautious, you see. There were two powerful parties at Court; therefore to make a decision either way would infallibly embroil them with one of those parties; so it seemed to them wisest to roost on the fence and shift the burden to other shoulders. And that is

what they did. They made final report that Joan's case was beyond their powers, and recommended that it be put into the hands of the learned and illustrious doctors of the University of Poitiers. Then they retired from the field, leaving behind them this little item of testimony, wrung from them by Joan's wise reticence: they said she was a 'gentle and simple little shepherdess, very candid, *but not given to talking.*'

It was quite true—in their case. But if they could have looked back and seen her with us in the happy pastures of Domremy, they would have perceived that she had a tongue that could go fast enough when no harm could come of her words.

So we travelled to Poitiers, to endure there three weeks of tedious delay while this poor child was being daily questioned and badgered before a great bench of—what? Military experts?—since what she had come to apply for was an army and the privilege of leading it to battle against the enemies of France. Oh no; it was a great bench of priests and monks—profoundly learned and astute casuists—renowned professors of theology! Instead of setting a military commission to find out if this valorous little soldier could win victories, they set a company of holy hair-splitters and phrasemongers to work to find out if the soldier was sound in her piety and had no doctrinal leaks. The rats were devouring the house, but instead of examining the cat's teeth and claws, they only concerned themselves to find out if it was a holy cat. If it was a pious cat, a moral cat, all right, never mind about the other capacities, they were of no consequence.

Joan was as sweetly self-possessed and tranquil before this grim tribunal, with its robed celebrities, its solemn state and imposing ceremonials, as if she were but a spectator and not herself on trial. She sat there, solitary on her bench, untroubled, and disconcerted the science of the sages with her sublime ignorance—an ignorance which was a fortress; arts, wiles, the learning—drawn from books, and all like missiles rebounded from its unconscious masonry and fell to the ground harm-

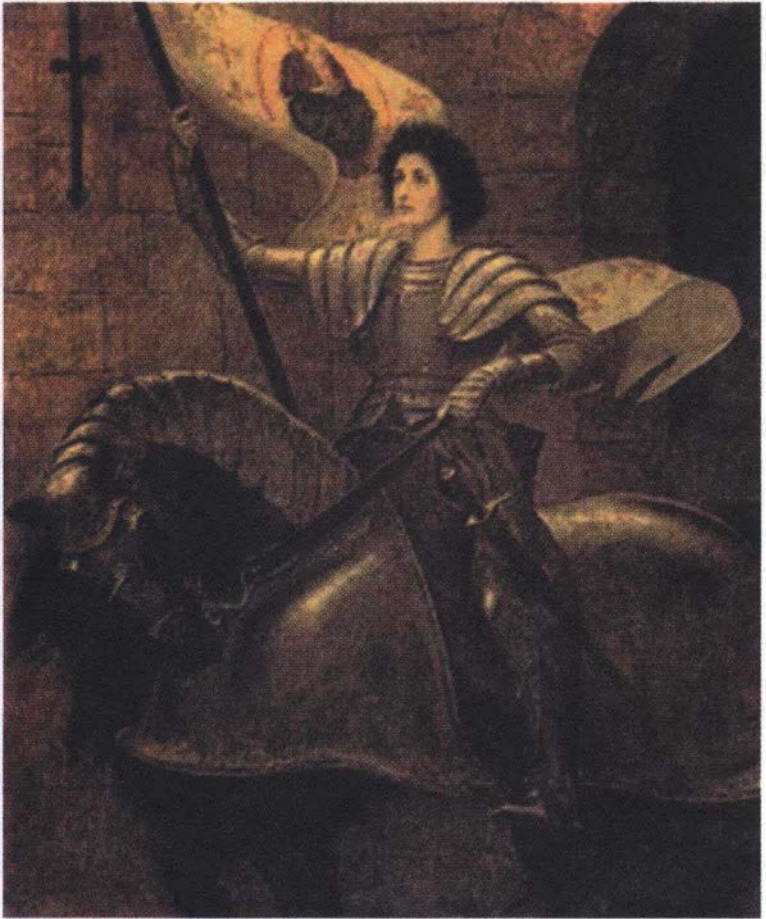
less; they could not dislodge the garrison which was within—Joan's serene great heart and spirit, the guards and keepers of her mission.

She answered all questions frankly, and she told all the story of her visions and of her experiences with the angels and what they said to her; and the manner of the telling was so unaffected, and so earnest and sincere, and made it all seem so life-like and real, that even that hard practical Court forgot itself and sat motionless and mute, listening with a charmed and wondering interest to the end. And if you would have other testimony than mine, look in the histories and you will find where an eye-witness, giving sworn testimony in the Rehabilitation process, says that she told that tale 'with a noble dignity and simplicity,' and as to its effect, says in substance what I have said. Seventeen, she was—seventeen, and all alone on her bench by herself; yet was not afraid, but faced that great company of erudite doctors of law and theology, and by the help of no art learned in the schools, but using only the enchantments which were hers by nature, of youth, sincerity, a voice soft and musical, and an eloquence whose source was the heart, not the head, she laid that spell upon them. Now was not that a beautiful thing to see? If I could, I would put it before you just as I saw it; then I know what you would say.

As I have told you, she could not read. One day they harried and pestered her with arguments,—reasonings, objections and other windy and wordy trivialities, gathered out of the works of this and that and the other great theological authority, until at last her patience vanished, and she turned upon them sharply and said:

'I don't know A from B; but I know this: that I am come by command of the Lord of Heaven to deliver Orleans from the English power and crown the King at Rheims, and the matters ye are puttering over are of no consequence!'

Necessarily those were trying days for her, and wearing for everybody that took part; but her share was the hardest, for she had no holidays, but must be always on hand and stay the



Joan of Arc by William Blake Richmond (1842-1921)

long hours through, whereas this, that, and the other inquisitor could absent himself and rest up from his fatigues when he got worn out. And yet she showed no wear, no weariness, and but seldom let fly her temper. As a rule she put her day through calm, alert, patient, fencing with those veteran masters of scholarly sword-play and coming out always without a scratch.

One day a Dominican sprung upon her a question which made everybody cock up his ears with interest; as for me, I trembled, and said to myself she is caught this time, poor Joan, for there is no way of answering this. The sly Dominican began in this way—in a sort of indolent fashion, as if the thing he was about was a matter of no moment:

‘You assert that God has willed to deliver France from this English bondage?’

‘Yes, He has willed it.’

‘You wish for men-at-arms, so that you may go to the relief of Orleans, I believe?’

‘Yes—and the sooner the better.’

‘God is all-powerful, and able to do whatsoever thing He wills to do, is it not so?’

‘Most surely. None doubts it.’

The Dominican lifted his head suddenly, and sprung that question I have spoken of, with exultation:

‘Then answer me this. If He has willed to deliver France, and is able to do whatsoever He wills, where is the need for men-at-arms?’

There was a fine stir and commotion when he said that, and a sudden thrusting forward of heads and putting up of hands to ears to catch the answer; and the Dominican wagged his head with satisfaction, and looked about him collecting his applause, for it shone in every face. But Joan was not disturbed. There was no note of disquiet in her voice when she answered:

‘He helps who help themselves. The sons of France will fight the battles, but *He* will give the victory!’

You could see a light of admiration sweep the house from face to face like a ray from the sun. Even the Dominican himself looked pleased, to see his master-stroke so neatly parried, and I heard a venerable bishop mutter, in the phrasing common to priest and people in that robust time, 'By God, the child has said true. He willed that Goliath should be slain, and He sent a child like this to do it!'

Another day, when the inquisition had dragged along until everybody looked drowsy and tired but Joan, brother Seguin, professor of theology in the University of Poitiers, who was a sour and sarcastic man, fell to plying Joan with all sorts of nagging questions in his bastard Limousin French—for he was from Limoges. Finally he said:

'How is it that you could understand those angels? What language did they speak?'

'French.'

'In-deed! How pleasant to know that our language is so honoured! Good French?'

'Yes—perfect.'

'Perfect, eh? Well, certainly *you* ought to know. It was even better than your own, eh?'

'As to that, I—I believe I cannot say,' said she, and was going on, but stopped. Then she added, almost as if she were saying it to herself, 'Still, it was an improvement on yours!'

I knew there was a chuckle back of her eyes, for all their innocence. Everybody shouted. Brother Seguin was nettled, and asked brusquely:

'Do you believe in God?'

Joan answered with an irritating nonchalance:

'Oh, well, yes—better than you, it is likely.'

Brother Seguin lost his patience, and heaped sarcasm after sarcasm upon her, and finally burst out in angry earnest, exclaiming:

'Very well, I can tell you this, you whose belief in God is so great: God has not willed that any shall believe in you without a sign. Where is your sign?—show it'

This roused Joan, and she was on her feet in a moment, and flung out her retort with spirit:

'I have not come to Poitiers to show signs and do miracles. Send me to Orleans and you shall have signs enough. Give me men-at-arms—few or many—and let me go!'

The fire was leaping from her eyes—ah, the heroic little figure! Can't you see her? There was a great burst of acclamations, and she sat down blushing, for it was not in her delicate nature to like being conspicuous. -

This speech and that episode about the French language scored two points against Brother Seguin, while he scored nothing against Joan; yet, sour man as he was, he was a manly man, and honest, as you can see by the histories; for at the Rehabilitation he could have hidden those unlucky incidents if he had chosen, but he didn't do it, but spoke them right out in his evidence.

On one of the later days of that three weeks' session the gowned scholars and professors made one grand assault all along the line, fairly overwhelming Joan with objections and arguments culled from the writings of every ancient and illustrious authority of the Roman Church. She was well nigh smothered; but at last she shook herself free and struck back, crying out:

'Listen! The Book of God is worth more than all these ye cite, and I stand upon *it*. And I tell ye there are things in that Book that not one among ye can read, with all your learning!'

From the first she was the guest, by invitation, of the dame De Rabateau, wife of a councillor of the Parliament of Poitiers; and to that house the great ladies of the city came nightly to see Joan and talk with her; and not these only, but the old lawyers, councillors, and scholars of the Parliament and the University. And these grave men, accustomed to weigh every strange and questionable thing, and cautiously consider it, and turn it about this way and that and still doubt it, came night after night, and night after night, falling ever deeper and deeper under the influence of that mysterious something, that

spell, that elusive and unwordable fascination, which was the supremest endowment of Joan of Arc, that winning and persuasive and convincing something which high and low alike recognised and felt, but which neither high nor low could explain or describe; and one by one they all surrendered, saying 'This child is sent of God.'

All day long Joan, in the great court and subject to its rigid rules of procedure, was at a disadvantage; her judges had things their own way; but at night she held court herself, and matters were reversed, she presiding, with her tongue free and her same judges there before her. There could be but one result; all the objections and hindrances they could build around her with their hard labours of the day she would charm away at night. In the end, she carried her judges with her in a mass, and got her great verdict without a dissenting voice.

The court was a sight to see when the president of it read it from his throne, for all the great people of the town were there who could get admission and find room. First there were some solemn ceremonies, proper and usual at such times; then, when there was silence again, the reading followed, penetrating the deep hush so that every word was heard in even the remotest parts of the house:

'It is found, and is hereby declared, that Joan of Arc, called the Maid, is a good Christian and good Catholic; that there is nothing in her person or her words contrary to the faith; and that the King may and ought to accept the succour she offers; for to repel it would be to offend the Holy Spirit, and render him unworthy of the aid of God.'

The court rose, and then the storm of plaudits burst forth unrebuked, dying down and bursting forth again and again, and I lost sight of Joan, for she was swallowed up in a great tide of people who rushed to congratulate her and pour out benedictions upon her and upon the cause of France, now solemnly and irrevocably delivered into her little hands.

* * *

It was indeed a great day, and a stirring thing to see.

She had won! It was a mistake of Tremouille and her other ill-wishers to let her hold court those nights.

The commission of priests sent to Lorraine ostensibly to inquire into Joan's character—in fact to weary her with delays and wear out her purpose and make her give it up—arrived back and reported her character perfect. Our affairs were in full career now, you see.

The verdict made a prodigious stir. Dead France woke suddenly to life, wherever the great news travelled. Whereas before, the spiritless and cowed people hung their heads and slunk away if one mentioned war to them, now they came clamouring to be enlisted under the banner of the Maid of Vaucouleurs, and the roaring of war songs and the thundering of the drums filled all the air. I remembered now what she had said, that time there in our village when I proved by facts and statistics that France's case was hopeless, and nothing could ever rouse the people from their lethargy:

'They will hear the drums—and they will answer, they will march!'

It has been said that misfortunes never come one at a time, but in a body. In our case it was the same with good luck. Having got a start it came flooding in, tide after tide. Our next wave of it was of this sort. There had been grave doubts among the priests as to whether the Church ought to permit a female soldier to dress like a man. But now came a verdict on that head. Two of the greatest scholars and theologians of the time—one of whom had been Chancellor of the University of Paris—rendered it. They decided that since Joan 'must do the work of a man and a soldier, it is just and legitimate that her apparel should conform to the situation.'

It was a great point gained, the Church's authority to dress as a man. Oh yes, wave on wave the good luck came sweeping in. Never mind about the smaller waves, let us come to the largest one of all, the wave that swept us small fry quite off our feet and almost drowned us with joy. The day of the great

verdict, couriers had been despatched to the King with it, and the next morning bright and early the clear notes of a bugle came floating to us on the crisp air, and we pricked up our ears and began to count them. One—two—three; pause; one—two; pause; one—two—three, again—and out we skipped and went flying; for that formula was used only when the King's herald-at-arms would deliver a proclamation to the people. As we hurried along, people came racing out of every street and house and alley, men, women, and children, all flushed, excited, and throwing lacking articles of clothing on as they ran; still those clear notes pealed out, and still the rush of people increased till the whole town was abroad and streaming along the principal street. At last we reached the square, which was now packed with citizens, and there, high on the pedestal of the great cross, we saw the herald in his brilliant costume, with his servitors about him. The next moment he began his delivery in the powerful voice proper to his office:

'Know all men, and take heed therefore, that the most high, the most illustrious Charles, by the grace of God King of France, hath been pleased to confer upon his well-beloved servant Joan of Arc, called the Maid, the title, emoluments, authorities, and dignity of General-in-Chief of the Armies of France—'

Here a thousand caps flew into the air, and the multitude burst into a hurricane of cheers that raged and raged till it seemed as if it would never come to an end; but at last it did; then the herald went on and finished:

—'and hath appointed to be her lieutenant and chief of staff a prince of his royal house, his grace the Duke of Alençon!'

That was the end, and the hurricane began again, and was split up into innumerable strips by the blowers of it and wafted through all the lanes and streets of the town.

General of the Armies of France, with a prince of the blood for subordinate! Yesterday she was nothing—to-day she was this. Yesterday she was not even a sergeant, not even a corporal, not even a private—to-day, with one step, she was at the top.

Yesterday she was less than nobody to the newest recruit—to-day her command was law to La Hire, Saintrailles, the Bastard of Orleans, and all those others, veterans of old renown, illustrious masters of the trade of war. These were the thoughts I was thinking; I was trying to realise this strange and wonderful thing that had happened, you see.

My mind went travelling back, and presently lighted upon a picture—a picture which was still so new and fresh in my memory that it seemed a matter of only yesterday—and indeed its date was no further back than the first days of January. This is what it was. A peasant girl in a far-off village, her seventeenth year not yet quite completed, and herself and her village as unknown as if they had been on the other side of the globe. She had picked up a friendless wanderer somewhere and brought it home—a small grey kitten in a forlorn and starving condition—and had fed it and comforted it and got its confidence and made it believe in her, and now it was curled up in her lap asleep, and she was knitting a coarse stocking and thinking—dreaming—about what, one may never know. And now—the kitten had hardly had time to become a cat, and yet already the girl is General of the Armies of France, with a prince of the blood to give orders to, and out of her village obscurity her name has climbed up like the sun and is visible from all corners of the land! It made me dizzy to think of these things, they were so out of the common order, and seemed so impossible.

* * *

Joan's first official act was to dictate a letter to the English commanders at Orleans, summoning them to deliver up all strongholds in their possession and depart out of France. She must have been thinking it all out before and arranging it in her mind, it flowed from her lips so smoothly, and framed itself into such vivacious and forcible language. Still, it might not have been so; she always had a quick mind and a capable

tongue, and her faculties were constantly developing in these latter weeks. This letter was to be forwarded presently from Blois. Men, provisions, and money were offering in plenty now, and Joan appointed Blois as a recruiting station and depot of supplies, and ordered up La Hire from the front to take charge.

The Great Bastard—him of the ducal house, and governor of Orleans—had been clamouring for weeks for Joan to be sent to him, and now came another messenger, old D'Aulon, a veteran officer, a trusty man and fine and honest. The King kept him, and gave him to Joan to be chief of her household, and commanded her to appoint the rest of her people herself, making their number and dignity accord with the greatness of her office; and at the same time he gave order that they should be properly equipped with arms, clothing, and horses.

Meantime the King was having a complete suit of armour made for her at Tours. It was of the finest steel, heavily plated with silver, richly ornamented with engraved designs, and polished like a mirror.

Joan's Voices had told her that there was an ancient sword hidden somewhere behind the altar of St. Catherine's at Fierbois, and she sent De Metz to get it. The priests knew of no such sword, but a search was made, and sure enough it was found in that place, buried a little way under the ground. It had no sheath and was very rusty, but the priests polished it up and sent it to Tours, whither we were now to come. They also had a sheath of crimson velvet made for it, and the people of Tours equipped it with another one, made of cloth of gold. But Joan meant to carry this sword always in battle; so she laid the showy sheaths away and got one made of leather. It was generally believed that this sword had belonged to Charlemagne, but that was only a matter of opinion. I wanted to sharpen that old blade, but she said it was not necessary, as she should never kill anybody, and should carry it only as a symbol of authority.

At Tours she designed her Standard, and a Scotch painter named James Power made it. It was of the most delicate white

boucassin, with fringes of silk. For device it bore the image of God the Father throned in the clouds and holding the world in His hand; two angels knelt at His feet, presenting lilies; inscription, Jesus, Maria; on the reverse the crown of France supported by two angels. She also caused a smaller standard or pennon to be made, whereon was represented an angel offering a lily to the Holy Virgin.

(Joan then goes to Blois where there is a big camp for the army. The camp is very disorderly, with soldiers roaming about, drinking and playing. There she meets La Hire, a rugged, tough, seasoned general, master of the camp, and orders him to set things right, impose proper discipline and, to his incredulity and dismay, make the troops attend holy services every day. He first argues against the latter command but must yield to Joan's insistence...)

In three days it was a clean camp and orderly, and those barbarians were herding to divine service twice a day like good children. The women were gone. La Hire was stunned by these marvels; he could not understand them. He went outside the camp when he wanted to swear. He was that sort of a man—sinful by nature and habit, but full of superstitious respect for holy places.

The enthusiasm of the reformed army for Joan, its devotion to her, and the hot desire she had aroused in it to be led against the enemy, exceeded any manifestations of this sort which La Hire had ever seen before in his long career. His admiration of it all, and his wonder over the mystery and miracle of it, were beyond his power to put into words. He had held this army cheap before, but his pride and confidence in it knew no limits now. He said:

“Two or three days ago it was afraid of a hen-roost; one

could storm the gates of hell with it now.'

Joan and he were inseparable, and a quaint and pleasant contrast they made. He was so big, she so little; he was so grey and so far along in his pilgrimage of life, she so youthful; his face was so bronzed and scarred, hers so fair and pink, so fresh and smooth; she was so gracious, and he so stern; she was so pure, so innocent, he such a cyclopaedia of sin. In her eye was stored all charity and compassion, in his, lightnings; when her glance fell upon you it seemed to bring benediction and the peace of God, but with his it was different generally.

They rode through the camp a dozen times a day, visiting every corner of it, observing, inspecting, perfecting; and wherever they appeared, the enthusiasm broke forth. They rode side by side, he a great figure of brawn and muscle, she a little masterpiece of roundness and grace; he a fortress of rusty iron, she a shining statuette of silver; and when the reformed raiders and bandits caught sight of them they spoke out, with affection and welcome in their voices, and said:

'There they come — Satan and the Page of Christ!'

All the three days that we were in Blois, Joan worked earnestly and tirelessly to bring La Hire to God—to rescue him from the bondage of sin—to breathe into his stormy heart the serenity and peace of religion. She urged, she begged, she implored him to pray. He stood out, the three days of our stay, begging almost piteously to be let off—to be let off from just that one thing, that impossible thing; he would do anything else—anything—command, and he would obey—he would go through the fire for her, if she said the word—but spare him this, only this, for he couldn't pray, had never prayed, he was ignorant of how to frame a prayer, he had no words to put it in.

And yet—can any believe it?—she carried even that point, she won that incredible victory. She made La Hire pray. It shows, I think, that nothing was impossible to Joan of Arc. Yes, he stood there before her and put up his mailed hands and made a prayer. And it was not borrowed, but was his very own;

he had none to help him frame it, he made it out of his own head—saying:

‘Fair Sir God, I pray you to do by La Hire as he would do by you if you were La Hire and he were God.’*

Then he put on his helmet and marched out of Joan’s tent as satisfied with himself as any one might be who has arranged a perplexed and difficult business to the content and admiration of all the parties concerned in the matter.

If I had known that he had been praying, I could have understood why he was feeling so superior, but of course I could not know that.

I was coming to the tent at that moment, and saw him come out, and saw him march away in that large fashion, indeed it was fine and beautiful to see. But when I got to the tent door I stopped and stepped back, grieved and shocked, for I heard Joan crying, as I mistakenly, thought—crying as if she could not contain nor endure the anguish of her soul, crying as if she would die. But it was not so, she was laughing—laughing at La Hire’s prayer.

It was not until six-and-thirty years afterwards that I found that out, and then—oh, then I only cried when that picture of young care-free mirth rose before me out of the blur and mists of that long-vanished time; for there had come a day between, when God’s good gift of laughter had gone out from me to come again no more in this life.

* * *

We marched out in great strength and splendour, and took the road toward Orleans. The initial part of Joan’s great dream was realising itself at last. It was the first time that any of us

* This prayer has been stolen many times and by many nations in the past four hundred and sixty years, but it originated with La Hire, and the fact is of official record in the National Archives of France. We have the authority of Michelet for this.—*Translator*.

youngsters had ever seen an army, and it was a most stately and imposing spectacle to us. It was indeed an inspiring sight, that interminable column, stretching away into the fading distances, and curving itself in and out of the crookedness of the road like a mighty serpent. Joan rode at the head of it with her personal staff; then came a body of priests singing the *Veni Creator*, the banner of the Cross rising out of their midst; after these the glinting forest of spears. The several divisions were commanded by the great Armagnac generals, La Hire, the Marshal de Boussac, the Sire de Retz, Florent d'Illiers, and Poton de Saintrailles.

Each in his degree was tough, and there were three degrees—tough, tougher, toughest—and La Hire was the last by a shade, but only a shade. They were just illustrious official brigands, the whole party; and by long habits of lawlessness they had lost all acquaintanceship with obedience, if they had ever had any.

The King's strict orders to them had been, 'Obey the General-in-Chief in everything; attempt nothing without her knowledge, do nothing without her command.'

But what was the good of saying that? These independent birds knew no law. They seldom obeyed the King; they never obeyed him when it didn't suit them to do it. Would they obey the Maid? In the first place they wouldn't know how to obey her or anybody else, and in the second place it was of course not possible for them to take her military character seriously—that country girl of seventeen who had been trained for the complex and terrible business of war—how? By tending sheep.

They had no idea of obeying her except in cases where their veteran military knowledge and experience showed them that the thing she required was sound and right when gauged by the regular military standards. Were they to blame for this attitude? I should think not. Old war worn captains are hard-headed, practical men. They do not easily believe in the ability of ignorant children to plan campaigns and command armies. No general that ever lived could have taken Joan seriously (militarily) before she raised the siege of Orleans and followed



Joan of Arc at Orleans by Jules-Eugène Lenepveu (1819-1898)

it with the great campaign of the Loire.

Did they consider Joan valueless? Far from it. They valued her as the fruitful earth values the sun—they fully believed she could produce the crop, but that it was in their line of business, not hers, to take it off. They had a deep and superstitious reverence for her as being endowed with a mysterious supernatural something that was able to do a mighty thing which they were powerless to do—blow the breath of life and valour into the dead corpses of cowed armies and turn them into heroes.

To their minds they were everything *with* her, but nothing without her. She could inspire the soldiers and fit them for battle—but fight the battle herself? Oh, nonsense—that was their function. They, the generals, would fight the battles, Joan would give the victory. That was their idea—an unconscious paraphrase of Joan's reply to the Dominican.

So they began by playing a deception upon her. She had a clear idea of how she meant to proceed. It was her purpose to march boldly upon Orleans by the north bank of the Loire. She gave that order to her generals. They said to themselves, 'The idea is insane—it is blunder No. 1; it is what might have been expected of this child who is ignorant of war.' They privately sent the word to the Bastard of Orleans. He also recognised the insanity of it—at least he thought he did—and privately advised the generals to get around the order in some way.

They did it by deceiving Joan. She trusted those people, she was not expecting this sort of treatment, and was not on the look-out for it. It was a lesson to her; she saw to it that the game was not played a second time.

Why was Joan's idea insane, from the generals' point of view, but not from hers? Because her plan was to raise the siege immediately, by fighting, while theirs was to besiege the besiegers and starve them out by closing their communications—a plan which would require months in the consummation.

The English had built a fence of strong fortresses called

bastilles around Orleans—fortresses which closed all the gates of the city but one. To the French generals the idea of trying to fight their way past those fortresses and lead the army into Orleans was preposterous; they believed that the result would be the army's destruction. One may not doubt that their opinion was militarily sound—no, *would* have been, but for one circumstance which they overlooked. That was this: the English soldiers were in a demoralised condition of superstitious terror; they had become satisfied that the Maid was in league with Satan. By reason of this a good deal of their courage had oozed out and vanished. On the other hand the Maid's soldiers were full of courage, enthusiasm, and zeal.

Joan could have marched by the English forts. However, it was not to be. She had been cheated out of her first chance to strike a heavy blow for her country.

In camp that night she slept in her armour on the ground. It was a cold night, and she was nearly as stiff as her armour itself when we resumed the march in the morning, for iron is not good material for a blanket. However, her joy in being now so far on her way to the theatre of her mission was fire enough to warm her, and it soon did it.

Her enthusiasm and impatience rose higher and higher with every mile of progress; but at last we reached Olivet, and down it went, and indignation took its place. For she saw the trick that had been played upon her—the river lay between us and Orleans.

She was for attacking one of the three bastilles that were on our side of the river and forcing access to the bridge which it guarded (a project which, if successful, would raise the siege instantly), but the long-ingrained fear of the English came upon her generals, and they implored her not to make the attempt. The soldiers wanted to attack, but had to suffer disappointment. So we moved on and came to a halt at a point opposite Chécy, six miles above Orleans.

Dunois, Bastard of Orleans, with a body of knights and citizens, came up from the city to welcome Joan. Joan was still

burning with resentment over the trick that had been put upon her, and was not in the mood for soft speeches, even to revered military idols of her childhood. She said:

‘Are you the Bastard of Orleans?’

‘Yes, I am he, and am right glad of your coming,’

‘And did you advise that I be brought by this side of the river instead of straight to Talbot and the English?’

Her high manner abashed him, and he was not able to answer with anything like a confident promptness, but with many hesitations and partial excuses he managed to get out the confession that for what he and the council had regarded as imperative military reasons they had so advised.

‘In God’s name,’ said Joan, ‘my Lord’s counsel is safer and wiser than yours. You thought to deceive me, but you have deceived yourselves, for I bring you the best help that ever knight or city had; for it is God’s help, not sent for love of me, but by God’s pleasure. At the prayer of St. Louis and St. Charlemagne He has had pity on Orleans, and will not suffer the enemy to have both the Duke of Orleans and his city. The provisions to save the starving people are here, the boats are below the city, the wind is contrary, they cannot come up hither. Now then tell me, in God’s name, you who are so wise, what that council of yours was thinking about, to invent this foolish difficulty.’

Dunois and the rest fumbled around the matter a moment, then gave in and conceded that a blunder had been made.

‘Yes, a blunder has been made,’ said Joan, ‘and except God take your proper work upon Himself and change the wind and correct your blunder for you, there is none else that can devise a remedy.’

Some of those people began to perceive that with all her technical ignorance she had practical good sense, and that with all her native sweetness and charm she was not the right kind of a person to play with.

Presently God did take the blunder in hand, and by His grace the wind did change. So the fleet of boats came up and

went away loaded with provisions and cattle, and conveyed that welcome succour to the hungry city, managing the matter successfully under protection of a sortie from the walls against the bastille of St. Loup. Then Joan began on the Bastard again:

‘You see here the army?’

‘Yes.’

‘It is here on this side by advice of your council?’

‘Yes.’

‘Now, in God’s name, can that wise council explain why it is better to have it here than it would be to have it in the bottom of the sea?’

Dunois made some wandering attempts to explain the inexplicable and excuse the inexcusable, but Joan cut him short and said—

‘Answer me this, good sir—has the army any value on this side of the river?’

The Bastard confessed that it hadn’t—that is, in view of the plan of campaign which she had devised and decreed.

‘And yet, knowing this, you had the hardihood to disobey my orders. Since the army’s place is on the other side, will you explain to me how it is to get there?’

The whole size of the needless muddle was apparent. Evasions were of no use; therefore Dunois admitted that there was no way to correct the blunder but to send the army all the way back to Blois, and let it begin over again and come up on the other side this time, according to Joan’s original plan.

Any other girl, after winning such a triumph as this over a veteran soldier of old renown, might have exulted a little and been excusable for it, but Joan showed no disposition of this sort. She dropped a word or two of grief over the precious time that must be lost, then began at once to issue commands for the march back. She sorrowed to see her army go; for she said its heart was great and its enthusiasm high, and that with it at her back she did not fear to face all the might of England.

All arrangements having been completed for the return of the main body of the army, she took the Bastard and La Hire

and a thousand men and went down to Orleans, where all the town was in a fever of impatience to have sight of her face. It was eight in the evening when she and the troops rode in at the Burgundy gate, with the Paladin preceding her with her standard. She was riding a white horse and she carried in her hand the sacred sword of Fierbois. You should have seen Orleans then. What a picture it was! Such black seas of people, such a starry firmament of torches, such roaring whirlwinds of welcome, such booming of bells and thundering of cannon! It was as if the world was come to an end. Everywhere in the glare of the torches one saw rank upon rank of upturned white faces, the mouths wide open, shouting, and the unchecked tears running down; Joan forged her slow way through the solid masses, her mailed form projecting above the pavement of heads like a silver statue. The people about her struggled along, gazing up at her through their tears with the rapt look of men and women who believe they are seeing one who is divine; and always her feet were being kissed by grateful folk, and such as failed of that privilege touched her horse and then kissed their fingers.

Nothing that Joan did escaped notice; everything she did was commented upon and applauded. You could hear the remarks going all the time.

‘There—she’s smiling—see!’

‘Now she’s taking her little plumed cap off to somebody—ah, it’s fine and graceful!’

‘She’s patting that woman on the head with her gauntlet.’

‘Oh, she was born on a horse—see her turn in her saddle, and kiss the hilt of her sword to the ladies in the window that threw the flowers down.’

‘Now there’s a poor woman lifting up a child—she’s kissed it—oh, she’s divine!’

‘What a dainty little figure it is, and what a lovely face—and such colour and animation!’

Joan’s slender long banner streaming backward had an accident—the fringe caught fire from a torch. She leaned forward and crushed the flame in her hand.

'She's not afraid of fire nor anything!' they shouted, and delivered a storm of admiring applause that made everything quake.

She rode to the cathedral and gave thanks to God, and the people crammed the place and added their devotions to hers; then she took up her march again and picked her slow way through the crowds and the wilderness of torches to the house of Jacques Boucher, treasurer of the Duke of Orleans, where she was to be the guest of his wife as long as she stayed in the city, and have his young daughter for comrade and room-mate. The delirium of the people went on the rest of the night, and with it the clamour of the joy-bells and the welcoming cannon.

Joan of Arc had stepped upon her stage at last, and was ready to begin.

* * *

She was ready, but must sit down and wait until there was an army to work with.

Next morning, Saturday, April 30, 1429, she set about inquiring after the messenger who carried her proclamation to the English from Blois—the one which she had dictated at Poitiers. Here is a copy of it. It is a remarkable document, for several reasons: for its matter-of-fact directness, for its high spirit and forcible diction, and for its naive confidence in her ability to achieve the prodigious task which she had laid upon herself, or which had been laid upon her—which you please. All through it you seem to see the pomps of war and hear the rumbling of the drums. In it Joan's warrior soul is revealed, and for the moment the soft little shepherdess has disappeared from your view. This untaught country damsel, unused to dictating anything at all to anybody, much less documents of state to kings and generals, poured out this procession of vigorous sentences as fluently as if this sort of work had been her trade from childhood:

JESUS MARIA

‘King of England, and you Duke of Bedford who call yourself Regent of France; William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk; and you Thomas Lord Scales, who style yourselves lieutenants of the said Bedford—do right to the King of Heaven. Render to the Maid who is sent by God the keys of all the good towns you have taken and violated in France. She is sent hither by God to restore the blood royal. She is very ready to make peace if you will do her right by giving up France and paying for what you have held. And you archers, companions of war, noble and otherwise, who are before the good city of Orleans, begone into your own land in God’s name, or expect news from the Maid who will shortly go to see you to your very great hurt. King of England, if you do not so, I am chief of war, and wherever I shall find your people in France I will drive them out, willing or not willing; and if they do not obey I will slay them all, but if they obey, I will have them to mercy. I am come hither by God, the King of Heaven, body for body, to put you out of France, in spite of those who would work treason and mischief against the kingdom. Think not you shall ever hold the kingdom from the King of Heaven, the Son of the Blessed Mary; King Charles shall hold it, for God wills it so, and has revealed it to him by the Maid. If you believe not the news sent by God through the Maid, wherever we shall meet you we will strike boldly and make such a noise as has not been in France these thousand years. Be sure that God can send more strength to the Maid than you can bring to any assault against her and her good men-at-arms; and then we shall

see who has the better right, the King of Heaven, or you. Duke of Bedford, the Maid prays you not to bring about your own destruction. If you do her right, you may yet go in her company where the French shall do the finest deed that has ever been done in Christendom, and if you do not, you shall be reminded shortly of your great wrongs.'

In that closing sentence she invites them to go on crusade with her to rescue the Holy Sepulchre.

No answer had been returned to this proclamation, and the messenger himself had not come back. So now she sent her two heralds with a new letter warning the English to raise the siege and requiring them to restore that missing messenger. The heralds came back without him. All they brought was notice from the English to Joan that they would presently catch her and burn her if she did not clear out now while she had a chance, and 'go back to her proper trade of minding cows.'

She held her peace, only saying it was a pity that the English would persist in inviting present disaster and eventual destruction when she was 'doing all she could to get them out of the country with their lives still in their bodies.'

Presently she thought of an arrangement that might be acceptable, and said to the heralds, 'Go back and say to Lord Talbot this, from me: "Come out of your bastilles with your host, and I will come with mine; if I beat you, go in peace out of France; if you beat me, burn me, according to your desire."''

I did not hear this, but Dunois did, and spoke of it. The challenge was refused.

Sunday morning her Voices or some instinct gave her a warning, and she sent Dunois to Blois to take command of the army and hurry it to Orleans. It was a wise move, for he found Regnault de Chartres and some more of the King's pet rascals there trying their best to disperse the army, and crippling all the efforts of Joan's generals to head it for Orleans. They were a fine lot, those miscreants. They turned their attention to

Dunois, now, but he had baulked Joan once, with unpleasant results to himself, and was not minded to meddle in that way again. He soon had the army moving.

(During the waiting period near Orleans, Joan sees a soldier in chains. Upon enquiry, she learns that he is a deserter who has been sentenced to death and is awaiting execution. Questioning further, she is told that he left the army because his wife was dying but came back voluntarily despite being aware that his life was at risk. Joan decides to pardon him. His nickname is the Dwarf although he is about seven feet tall and very big. He vows allegiance to the person of Joan and becomes a kind of bodyguard for her. He will indeed be at her sides in all the battles. Meanwhile, on both sides, everyone is waiting for the battle for Orleans to begin. Suddenly...)

About noon I was chatting with Madame Boucher; nothing was going on, all was quiet, when Catherine Boucher suddenly entered in great excitement, and said—

‘Fly, sir, fly! The Maid was dozing in her chair in my room, when she sprang up and cried out, “French blood is flowing!—my arms, give me my arms!” Her giant was on guard at the door, and he brought D’Aulon, who began to arm her, and I and the giant have been warning the staff. Fly!—and stay by her; and if there really is a battle, keep her out of it—don’t let her risk herself—there is no need—if the men know she is near and looking on, it is all that is necessary. Keep her out of the fight—don’t fail of this!’

I started on a run, saying, sarcastically—for I was always fond of sarcasm, and it was said that I had a most neat gift that way—

‘Oh yes, nothing easier than that—I’ll attend to it!’

At the furthest end of the house I met Joan, fully armed, hurrying toward the door, and she said—

‘Ah, French blood is being spilt, and you did not tell me.’

‘Indeed I did not know it,’ I said; ‘there are no sounds of war; everything is quiet, your Excellency.’

‘You will hear war-sounds enough in a moment,’ she said, and was gone.

It was true. Before one could count five there broke upon the stillness the swelling rush and tramp of an approaching multitude of men and horses, with hoarse cries of command; and then out of the distance came the muffled deep *boom!*—*boom-boom!*—*boom!* of cannon, and straightway that rushing multitude was roaring by the house like a hurricane.

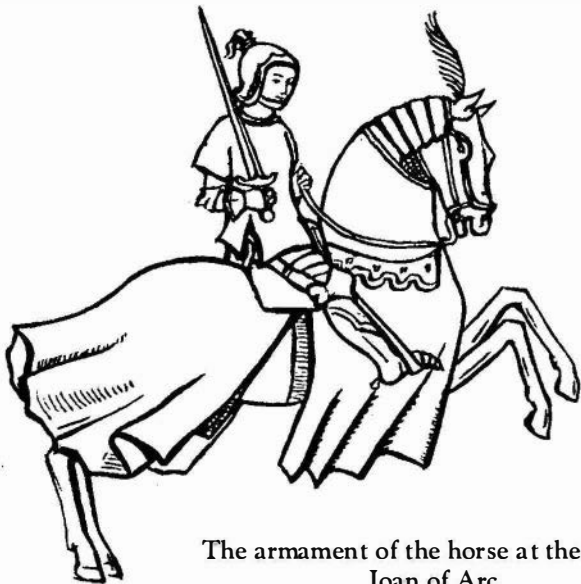
Our knights and all our staff came flying, armed, but with no horses ready, and we burst out after Joan in a body, the Paladin in the lead with the banner. The surging crowd was made up half of citizens and half of soldiers, and had no recognised leader. When Joan was seen a huzzah went up, and she shouted—

‘A horse—a horse!’

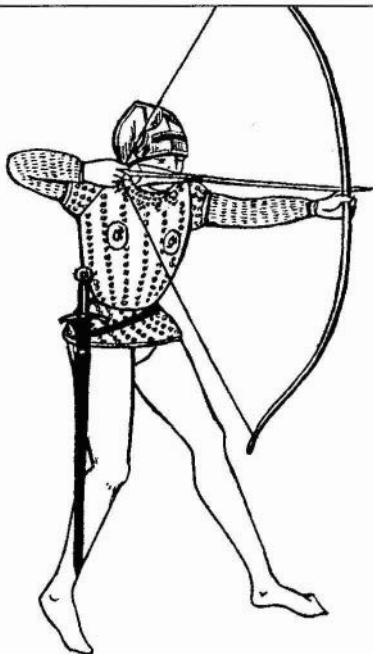
A dozen saddles were at her disposal in a moment. She mounted, a hundred people shouting—

‘Way, there—way for the MAID OF ORLEANS!’ The first time that that immortal name was ever uttered—and I, praise God, was there to hear it! The mass divided itself like the waters of the Red Sea, and down this lane Joan went skimming like a bird, crying ‘Forward, French hearts—follow me!’ and we came winging in her wake on the rest of the borrowed horses, the holy standard streaming above us, and the lane closing together in our rear.

This was a different thing from the ghastly march past the dismal bastilles. No, we felt fine, now, and all a-whirl with enthusiasm. The explanation of this sudden uprising was this. The city and the little garrison, so long hopeless and afraid, had gone wild over Joan’s coming, and could no longer restrain their desire to get at the enemy; so, without orders from anybody, a few hundred soldiers and citizens had plunged out at



The armament of the horse at the time of
Joan of Arc



An archer at the time of Joan of Arc



A crossbowman at the time of
Joan of Arc

the Burgundy gate on a sudden impulse and made a charge on one of Lord Talbot's most formidable fortresses—St. Loup—and were getting the worst of it. The news of this had swept through the city and startled this new crowd that we were with.

As we poured out at the gate we met a force bringing in the wounded from the front. The sight moved Joan, and she said—

'Ah, French blood; it makes my hair rise to see it!'

We were soon on the field, soon in the midst of the turmoil. Joan was seeing her first real battle, and so were we.

It was a battle in the open field; for the garrison of St. Loup had sallied confidently out to meet the attack, being used to victories when 'witches' were not around. The sally had been re-enforced by troops from the 'Paris' bastille, and when we approached the French were getting whipped and were falling back. But when Joan came charging through the disorder with her banner displayed, crying 'Forward, men—follow me!' there was a change; the French turned about and surged forward like a solid wave of the sea, and swept the English before them, hacking and slashing, and being hacked and slashed, in a way that was terrible to see.

In the field the Dwarf had no assignment; that is to say, he was not under orders to occupy any particular place, therefore he chose his place for himself, and went ahead of Joan and made a road for her. It was horrible to see the iron helmets fly into fragments under his dreadful axe. He called it cracking nuts, and it looked like that. He made a good road, and paved it well with flesh and iron. Joan and the rest of us followed it so briskly that we outsped our forces and had the English behind us as well as before. The knights commanded us to face outwards around Joan, which we did, and then there was work done that was fine to see. One was obliged to respect the Paladin, now. Being right under Joan's exalting and transforming eye, he forgot his native prudence, he forgot his diffidence in the presence of danger, he forgot what fear was, and he never laid about him in his imaginary battles in a more

tremendous way than he did in this real one; and wherever he struck there was an enemy the less.

We were in that close place only a few minutes; then our forces to the rear broke through with a great shout and joined us, and then the English fought a retreating fight, but in a fine and gallant way, and we drove them to their fortress foot by foot, they facing us all the time, and their reserves on the walls raining showers of arrows, cross-bow bolts, and stone cannon-balls upon us.

The bulk of the enemy got safely within the works and left us outside with piles of French and English dead and wounded for company—a sickening sight, an awful sight to us youngsters, for our little ambush fights in February had been in the night, and the blood and the mutilations and the dead faces were mercifully dim, whereas we saw these things now for the first time in all their naked ghastliness.

Now arrived Dunois from the city, and plunged through the battle on his foam-flecked horse and galloped up to Joan, saluting, and uttering handsome compliments as he came. He waved his hand toward the distant walls of the city, where a multitude of flags were flaunting gaily in the wind, and said the populace were up there observing her fortunate performance and rejoicing over it, and added that she and the forces would have a great reception now.

‘Now? Hardly now, Bastard. Not yet!’ ‘Why not yet? Is there more to be done?’ ‘More, Bastard? We have but begun! We will take this fortress.’

‘Ah, you can’t be serious! We can’t take this place; let me urge you not to make the attempt; it is too desperate. Let me order the forces back.’

Joan’s heart was overflowing with the joys and enthusiasms of war, and it made her impatient to hear such talk. She cried out—

‘Bastard, Bastard, will ye play *always* with these English? Now verily I tell you we will not budge until this place is ours. We will carry it by storm. Sound the charge!’

'Ah, my General—'

'Waste no more time, man—let the bugles sound the assault!' and we saw that strange deep light in her eye which we named the battle-light, and learned to know so well in later fields.

The martial notes pealed out, the troops answered with a yell, and down they came against that formidable work, whose outlines were lost in its own cannon smoke, and whose sides were spouting flame and thunder.

We suffered repulse after repulse, but Joan was here and there and everywhere encouraging the men, and she kept them to their work. During three hours the tide ebbed and flowed, flowed and ebbed; but at last La Hire, who was now come, made a final and resistless charge, and the bastille St. Loup was ours. We gutted it, taking all its stores and artillery, and then destroyed it.

When all our host was shouting itself hoarse with rejoicings, and there went up a cry for the General, for they wanted to praise her and glorify her and do her homage for her victory, we had trouble to find her; and when we did find her, she was off by herself, sitting among a ruck of corpses, with her face in her hands, crying—for she was a young girl, you know, and her hero-heart was a young girl's heart too, with the pity and the tenderness that are natural to it. She was thinking of the mothers of those dead friends and enemies.

Among the prisoners were a number of priests, and Joan took these under her protection and saved their lives. It was urged that they were most probably combatants in disguise, but she said—

'As to that, how can any tell? They wear the livery of God, and if even one of these wears it rightfully, surely it were better that all the guilty should escape than that we have upon our hands the blood of that innocent man. I will lodge them where I lodge, and feed them, and send them away in safety.'

We marched back to the city with our crop of cannon and prisoners on view and our banners displayed. Here was the first substantial bit of war-work the imprisoned people had seen in

the seven months that the siege had endured, the first chance they had had to rejoice over a French exploit. You may guess that they made good use of it. They and the bells went mad. Joan was their darling now, and the press of people struggling and shouldering each other to get a glimpse of her was so great that we could hardly push our way through the streets at all. Her new name had gone all about, and was on everybody's lips. The Holy Maid of Vaucouleurs was a forgotten title; the city had claimed her for its own, and she was the MAID OF ORLEANS now. It is a happiness to me to remember that I heard that name the first time it was ever uttered. Between that first utterance and the last time it will be uttered on this earth—ah, think how many mouldering ages will lie in that gap!

The Boucher family welcomed her back as if she had been a child of the house, and saved from death against all hope or probability. They chided her for going into the battle and exposing herself to danger during all those hours. They could not realise that she had meant to carry her warriorship so far, and asked her if it had really been her purpose to go right into the turmoil of the fight, or hadn't she got swept into it by accident and the rush of the troops? They begged her to be more careful another time. It was good advice, maybe, but it fell upon pretty unfruitful soil.

* * *

(...) The next day Joan wanted to go against the enemy again, but it was the feast of the Ascension, and the holy council of bandit generals were too pious to be willing to profane it with bloodshed. But privately they profaned it with plottings, a sort of industry just in their line. They decided to do the only thing proper to do now in the new circumstances of the case—feign an attack on the most important bastille on the Orleans side, and then, if the English weakened the far more important fortresses on the other side of the river to

come to its help, cross in force and capture those works. This would give them the bridge and free communication with the Sologne, which was French territory. They decided to keep this latter part of the programme secret from Joan.

Joan intruded and took them by surprise. She asked them what they were about and what they had resolved upon. They said they had resolved to attack the most important of the English bastilles on the Orleans side next morning—and there the spokesman stopped. Joan said—

‘Well, go on.’

‘There is nothing more. That is all.’

‘Am I to believe this? That is to say, am I to believe that you have lost your wits?’ She turned to Dunois, and said, ‘Bastard, you have sense, answer me this: if this attack is made and the bastille taken, how much better off would we be than we are now?’

The Bastard hesitated, and then began some rambling talk not quite germane to the question. Joan interrupted him and said—

‘That will do, good Bastard, you have answered. Since the Bastard is not able to mention any advantage to be gained by taking that bastille and stopping there, it is not likely that any of you could better the matter. You waste much time here in inventing plans that lead to nothing, and making delays that are a damage. Are you concealing something from me? Bastard, this council has a general plan, I take it; without going into details, what is it?’

‘It is the same it was in the beginning, seven months ago—to get provisions in for a long siege, and then sit down and tire the English out.’

‘In the name of God! As if seven months was not enough, you want to provide for a year of it. Now ye shall drop these pusillanimous dreams—the English shall go in three days!’

Several exclaimed—

‘Ah, General, General, be prudent!’

‘Be prudent and starve? Do ye call that war? I tell you this,

if you do not already know it: The new circumstances have changed the face of matters. The true point of attack has shifted; it is on the other side of the river now. One must take the fortifications that command the bridge. The English know that if we are not fools and cowards we will try to do that. They are grateful for your piety in wasting this day. They will re-enforce the bridge forts from this side to-night, knowing what ought to happen to-morrow. You have but lost a day and made our task harder, for we *will* cross and take the bridge forts. Bastard, tell me the truth—does not this council know that there is no other course for us than the one I am speaking of?’

Dunois conceded that the council did know it to be the most desirable, but considered it impracticable; and he excused the council as well as he could by saying that inasmuch as nothing was really and rationally to be hoped for but a long continuance of the siege and wearying out of the English, they were naturally a little afraid of Joan’s impetuous notions. He said—

‘You see, we are sure that the waiting game is the best, whereas you would carry everything by storm.’

‘That I would!—and moreover that I will! You have my orders—here and now. We will move upon the forts of the south bank to-morrow at dawn.’

‘And carry them by storm?’

‘Yes, carry them by storm!’

La Hire came clanking in, and heard the last remark. He cried out—

‘By my *bâton*, that is the music I love to hear! Yes, that is the right tune and the beautiful words, my General—we will carry them by storm!’

He saluted in his large way and came up and shook Joan by the hand.

Some member of the council was heard to say—

‘It follows, then, that we must begin with the bastille St. John, and that will give the English time to—’

Joan turned and said—

‘Give yourselves no uneasiness about the bastille St. John. The English will know enough to retire from it and fall back on the bridge bastilles when they see us coming.’ She added, with a touch of sarcasm, ‘Even a war-council would know enough to do that, itself.’

Then she took her leave. La Hire made this general remark to the council:

‘She is a child, and that is all ye seem to see. Keep to that superstition if you must, but you perceive that this child understands this complex game of war as well as any of you; and if you want my opinion without the trouble of asking for it, here you have it without ruffles or embroidery —by God, I think she can teach the best of you how to *play* it!’

Joan had spoken truly; the sagacious English saw that the policy of the French had undergone a revolution; that the policy of paltering and dawdling was ended; that in place of taking blows, blows were to be struck, now; therefore they made ready for the new state of things by transferring heavy reinforcements to the bastilles of the south bank from those of the north.

The city learned the great news that once more in French history, after all these humiliating years, France was going to take the offensive; that France, so used to retreating, was going to advance; that France, so long accustomed to skulking, was going to face about and strike. The joy of the people passed all bounds. The city walls were black with them to see the army march out in the morning in that strange new position—its front, not its tail, toward an English camp. You shall imagine for yourselves what the excitement was like and how it expressed itself when Joan rode out at the head of the host with her banner floating above her.

We crossed the river in strong force, and a tedious long job it was, for the boats were small and not numerous. Our landing on the island of St. Aignan was not disputed. We threw a bridge of a few boats across the narrow channel thence to the south shore and took up our march in good order and unmolested;

for although there was a fortress there—St. John—the English vacated and destroyed it and fell back on the bridge forts below as soon as our first boats were seen to leave the Orleans shore; which was what Joan had said would happen, when she was disputing with the council.

We moved down the shore and Joan planted her standard before the bastille of the Augustins, the first of the formidable works that protected the end of the bridge. The trumpets sounded the assault, and two charges followed in handsome style; but we were too weak, as yet, for our main body was still lagging behind. Before we could gather for a third assault the garrison of St. Privé were seen coming up to re-enforce the big bastille. They came on a run, and the Augustins sallied out, and both forces came against us with a rush, and sent our small army flying in a panic, and followed us, slashing and slaying, and shouting jeers and insults at us.

Joan was doing her best to rally the men, but their wits were gone, their hearts were dominated for the moment by the old-time dread of the English. Joan's temper flamed up, and she halted and commanded the trumpets to sound the advance. Then she wheeled about and cried out—

'If there is but a dozen of you that are not cowards, it is enough—follow me!'

Away she went, and after her a few dozen who had heard her words and been inspired by them. The pursuing force was astonished to see her sweeping down upon them with this handful of men, and it was their turn now to experience a grisly fright—surely this *is* a witch, this is a child of Satan! That was their thought—and without stopping to analyse the matter they turned and fled in a panic.

Our flying squadrons heard the bugle and turned to look; and when they saw the Maid's banner speeding in the other direction and the enemy scrambling ahead of it in disorder, their courage returned and they came scouring after us.

La Hire heard it and hurried his force forward and caught up with us just as we were planting our banner again before the

ramparts of the Augustins. We were strong enough now. We had a long and tough piece of work before us, but we carried it through before night, Joan keeping us hard at it, and she and La Hire saying we were able to take that big bastille, and *must*. The English fought like—well, they fought like the English; when that is said, there is no more to say. We made assault after assault, through the smoke and flame and the deafening cannon-blasts, and at last as the sun was sinking we carried the place with a rush, and planted our standard on its walls.

The Augustins was ours. The Tourelles must be ours, too, if we would free the bridge and raise the siege. We had achieved one great undertaking, Joan was determined to accomplish the other. We must lie on our arms where we were, hold fast to what we had got, and be ready for business in the morning. So Joan was not minded to let the men be demoralised by pillage and riot and carousings; she had the Augustins burned, with all its stores in it, excepting the artillery and ammunition.

Everybody was tired out with this long day's hard work, and of course this was the case with Joan; still, she wanted to stay with the army before the Tourelles, to be ready for the assault in the morning. The chiefs argued with her, and at last persuaded her to go home and prepare for the great work by taking proper rest, and also by having a leech look to a wound which she had received in her foot. So we crossed with them and went home.

Just as usual, we found the town in a fury of joy, all the bells clanging, everybody shouting, and several people drunk. We never went out or came in without furnishing good and sufficient reasons for one of these pleasant tempests, and so the tempest was always on hand. There had been a blank absence of reasons for this sort of upheavals for the past seven months, therefore the people took to the upheavals with all the more relish on that account.

(...) We were up at dawn, and after mass we started. In the hall we met the master of the house, who was grieved, good man, to see Joan going breakfastless to such a day's work, and begged her to wait and eat, but she couldn't afford the time—that is to say, she couldn't afford the patience, she being in such a blaze of anxiety to get at that last remaining bastille which stood between her and the completion of the first great step in the rescue and redemption of France. Boucher put in another plea:

'But think—we poor beleaguered citizens who have hardly known the flavour of fish for these many months, have spoil of that sort again, and we owe it to you. There's a noble shad for breakfast; wait—be persuaded.'

Joan said—

'Oh, there's going to be fish in plenty; when this day's work is done the whole river-front will be yours to do as you please with.'

'Ah, your Excellency will do well, *that* I know; but we don't require quite that much, even of you ; you shall have a month for it in place of a day. Now be beguiled—wait and eat. There's a saying that he that would cross a river twice in the same day in a boat, will do well to eat fish for luck, lest he have an accident.'

'That doesn't fit my case, for to-day I cross but once in a boat.'

'Oh, don't say that. Aren't you coming back to us?'

'Yes, but not in a boat.'

'How, then?'

'By the bridge.'

'Listen to that—by the bridge! Now stop this jesting, dear General, and do as I would have you. It's a noble fish.'

'Be good, then, and save me some for supper; and I will bring one of those Englishmen with me and he shall have his share.'

'Ah, well, have your way if you must. But he that fasts must attempt but little and stop early. When shall you be back?'

‘When I’ve raised the siege of Orleans. FORWARD!’

We were off. The streets were full of citizens and of groups and squads of soldiers, but the spectacle was melancholy. There was not a smile anywhere, but only universal gloom. It was as if some vast calamity had smitten all hope and cheer dead. We were not used to this, and were astonished. But when they saw the Maid, there was an immediate stir, and the eager question flew from mouth to mouth—

‘Where is she going? Whither is she bound?’

Joan heard it, and called out—

‘Whither would ye suppose? I am going to take the Tourelles.’

It would not be possible for any to describe how those few words turned that mourning into joy—into exaltation—into frenzy; and how a storm of huzzahs burst out and swept down the streets in every direction and woke those corpse-like multitudes to vivid life and action and turmoil in a moment. The soldiers broke from the crowd and came flocking to our standard, and many of the citizens ran and got pikes and halberds and joined us. As we moved on, our numbers increased steadily, and the hurraing continued—yes, we moved through a solid cloud of noise, as you may say, and all the windows on both sides contributed to it, for they were filled with excited people.

You see, the council had closed the Burgundy gate and placed a strong force there, under that stout soldier Raoul de Gaucourt, Bailly of Orleans, with orders to prevent Joan from getting out and resuming the attack on the Tourelles, and this shameful thing had plunged the city into sorrow and despair. But that feeling was gone now. They believed the Maid was a match for the council, and they were right.

When we reached the gate, Joan told Gaucourt to open it and let her pass.

He said it would be impossible to do this, for his orders were from the council and were strict. Joan said

‘There is no authority above mine but the King’s. If you have an order from the King, produce it.’

'I cannot claim to have an order from him, General.' 'Then make way, or take the consequences!' He began to argue the case, for he was like the rest of the tribe, always ready to fight with words, not acts; but in the midst of his gabble Joan interrupted with the terse order—

'Charge!'

We came with a rush, and brief work we made of that small job. It was good to see the Bailly's surprise. He was not used to this unsentimental promptness. He said afterwards that he was cut off in the midst of what he was saying—in the midst of an argument by which he could have proved that he could not let Joan pass—an argument which Joan could not have answered.

'Still, it appears she did answer it,' said the person he was talking to.

We swung through the gate in great style, with a vast accession of noise, the most of which was laughter, and soon our van was over the river and moving down against the Tourelles.

First we must take a supporting work called a boulevard, and which was otherwise nameless, before we could assault the great bastille. Its rear communicated with the bastille by a drawbridge, under which ran a swift and deep strip of the Loire. The boulevard was strong, and Dunois doubted our ability to take it, but Joan had no such doubt. She pounded it with artillery all the forenoon, then about noon she ordered an assault and led it herself. We poured into the fosse through the smoke and a tempest of missiles, and Joan, shouting encouragements to her men, started to climb a scaling-ladder, when that misfortune happened which we knew was to happen—the iron bolt from an arbalest struck between her neck and her shoulder, and tore its way down through her armour. When she felt the sharp pain and saw her blood gushing over her breast, she was frightened, poor girl, and as she sank to the ground she began to cry, bitterly.

The English sent up a glad shout and came surging down in strong force to take her, and then for a few minutes the might

of both adversaries was concentrated upon that spot. Over her and about her, English and French fought with desperation—for she stood for France, indeed she was France to both sides—whichever won her won France, and could keep it for ever. Right there in that small spot, and in ten minutes by the clock, the fate of France, for all time, was to be decided, and was decided.

If the English had captured Joan then, Charles VII would have flown the country, the Treaty of Troyes would have held good, and France, already English property, would have become, without further dispute, an English province, to so remain until the Judgment Day. A nationality and a kingdom were at stake there, and no more time to decide it in than it takes to hard-boil an egg. It was the most momentous ten minutes that the clock has ever ticked in France, or ever will. Whenever you read in histories about hours or days or weeks in which the fate of one or another nation hung in the balance, do not you fail to remember, nor your French hearts to beat the quicker for the remembrance, the ten minutes that France, called otherwise Joan of Arc, lay bleeding in the fosse that day, with two nations struggling over her for her possession.

And you will not forget the Dwarf. For he stood over her, and did the work of any six of the others. He swung his axe with both hands; whenever it came down, he said those two words, 'For France!' and a splintered helmet flew like eggshells, and the skull that carried it had learned its manners and would offend the French no more. He piled a bulwark of iron-clad dead in front of him and fought from behind it; and at last when the victory was ours we closed about him, shielding him, and he ran up a ladder with Joan as easily as another man would carry a child, and bore her out of the battle, a great crowd following and anxious, for she was drenched with blood to her feet, half of it her own and the other half English, for bodies had fallen across her as she lay and had poured their red life streams over her. One couldn't see the white armour now, with that awful dressing over it.

The iron bolt was still in the wound—some say it projected out behind the shoulder. It may be—I did not wish to see, and did not try to. It was pulled out, and the pain made Joan cry again, poor thing. Some say she pulled it out herself because others refused, saying they could not bear to hurt her. As to this I do not know; I only know it was pulled out, and that the wound was treated with oil and properly dressed.

Joan lay on the grass, weak and suffering, hour after hour, but still insisting that the fight go on. Which it did, but not to much purpose, for it was only under her eye that men were heroes and not afraid. They were like the Paladin; I think he was afraid of his shadow—I mean in the afternoon, when it was very big and long; but when he was under Joan's eye and the inspiration of her great spirit, what was he afraid of? Nothing in this world—and that is just the truth.

Toward night Dunois gave it up. Joan heard the bugles.

'What!' she cried. 'Sounding the retreat!'

Her wound was forgotten in a moment. She countermanded the order, and sent another, to the officer in command of a battery, to stand ready to fire five shots in quick succession. This was a signal to a force on the Orleans side of the river under La Hire, who was not, as some of the histories say, with *us*. It was to be given whenever Joan should feel sure the boulevard was about to fall into her hands—then that force must make a counter-attack on the Tourelles by way of the bridge.

Joan mounted her horse, now, with her staff about her, and when our people saw us coming they raised a great shout, and were at once eager for another assault on the boulevard. Joan rode straight to the fosse where she had received her wound, and standing there in the rain of bolts and arrows, she ordered the Paladin to let her long standard blow free, and to note when its fringes should touch the fortress. Presently he said—

'It touches.'

'Now, then,' said Joan to the waiting battalions, 'the place is yours—enter in! Bugles, sound the assault! Now, then—all together—*go!*'

And go it was. You never saw anything like it. We swarmed up the ladders and over the battlements like a wave—and the place was our property. Why, one might live a thousand years and never see so gorgeous a thing as that again. There, hand to hand, we fought like wild beasts, for there was no give-up to those English—there was no way to convince one of those people but to kill him, and even then he doubted. At least so it was thought in those days, and maintained by many.

We were busy and never heard the five cannon-shots fired, but they *were* fired a moment after Joan had ordered the assault; and so, while we were hammering and being hammered in the smaller fortress, the reserve on the Orleans side poured across the bridge and attacked the Tourelles from that side. A fire-boat was brought down and moored under the drawbridge which connected the Tourelles with our boulevard; wherefore, when at last we drove our English ahead of us and they tried to cross that drawbridge and join their friends in the Tourelles, the burning timbers gave way under them and emptied them in a mass into the river in their heavy armour—and a pitiful sight it was to see brave men die such a death as that.

'Ah, God pity them!' said Joan, and wept to see that sorrowful spectacle. She said those gentle words and wept those compassionate tears, although one of those perishing men had grossly insulted her with a coarse name three days before, when she had sent him a message asking him to surrender. That was their leader, Sir William Glasdale, a most valorous knight. He was clothed all in steel; so he plunged under the water like a lance, and of course came up no more.

We soon patched a sort of bridge together and threw ourselves against the last stronghold of the English power that barred Orleans from friends and supplies.

Before the sun was quite down, Joan's for ever memorable day's work was finished, her banner floated from the fortress of the Tourelles, her promise was fulfilled, she had raised the siege of Orleans!

The seven months' beleaguerment was ended, the thing

which the first generals of France had called impossible was accomplished; in spite of all that the King's ministers and war-councils could do to prevent it, this little country maid of seventeen had carried her immortal task through, and had done it in four days!

Good news travels fast, sometimes, as well as bad. By the time we were ready to start homewards by the bridge the whole city of Orleans was one red flame of bonfires, and the heavens blushed with satisfaction to see it; and the booming and bellowing of cannon and the banging of bells surpassed by great odds anything that even Orleans had attempted before in the way of noise.

When we arrived—well, there is no describing that. Why, those acres of people that we ploughed through shed tears enough to raise the river; there was not a face in the glare of those fires that hadn't tears streaming down it; and if Joan's feet had not been protected by iron they would have kissed them off of her. 'Welcome! welcome to the Maid of Orleans!' That was the cry; I heard it a hundred thousand times. 'Welcome to *our* Maid!' some of them worded it.

No other girl in all history has ever reached such a summit of glory as Joan of Arc reached that day. And do you think it turned her head, and that she sat up to enjoy that delicious music of homage and applause? No; another girl would have done that, but not this one. That was the greatest heart and the simplest that ever beat. She went straight to bed and to sleep, like any tired child; and when the people found she was wounded and would rest, they shut off all passage and traffic in that region and stood guard themselves the whole night through, to see that her slumbers were not disturbed. They said, 'She has given us peace, she shall have peace herself.'

All knew that that region would be empty of English next day, and all said that neither the present citizens nor their posterity would ever cease to hold that day sacred to the memory of Joan of Arc. That word has been true for more than sixty years; it will continue so always.

Orleans will never forget the 8th of May, nor ever fail to celebrate it. It is Joan of Arc's day—and holy.*

(Despite this great victory and Joan's desire to continue the campaign against the English forces, the king is once more hesitant, listening to his advisers insisting on caution. Thus a whole month is wasted. Finally, Joan is authorised to move on. Among her generals, some want to be prudent, but La Hire and a few others who have seen the unique audacity of Joan say that even strongholds such as Jargeau, heavily defended, can be taken by the special storm unleashed by Joan's leadership in the battlefield. So the army begins the new campaign...)

We made a gallant show next day when we filed out through the frowning gates of Orleans, with banners flying and Joan and the Grand Staff in the van of the long column. Those two young De Lavals were come, now, and were joined to the Grand Staff. Which was well; war being their proper trade, for they were grandsons of that illustrious fighter Bertrand du Guesclin, Constable of France in earlier days. Louis de Bourbon, the Marshal de Rais, and the Vidame de Chartres were added also. We had a right to feel a little uneasy, for we knew that a force of five thousand men was on its way under Sir John Fastolfe to reinforce Jargeau, but I think we were not uneasy, nevertheless. In truth, that force was not yet in our neighbourhood. Sir John was loitering; for some reason or other he was not hurrying. He was losing precious time—four days at Etampes, and four more at Janville.

We reached Jargeau and began business at once. Joan sent

* It is still celebrated every year with civic and military pomps and solemnities.—*Translator*

forward a heavy force which hurled itself against the outworks in handsome style, and gained a footing and fought hard to keep it; but it presently began to fall back before a sortie from the city. Seeing this, Joan raised her battle-cry and led a new assault herself under a furious artillery fire. The Paladin was struck down at her side, wounded, but she snatched her standard from his failing hand, and plunged on through the ruck of flying missiles, cheering her men with encouraging cries; and then for a good time one had turmoil, and clash of steel, and collision and confusion of struggling multitudes, and the hoarse bellowing of the guns; and then the hiding of it all under a rolling firmament of smoke; a firmament through which veiled vacancies appeared for a moment now and then, giving fitful dim glimpses of the wild tragedy enacting beyond; and always at these times one caught sight of that slight figure in white mail which was the centre and soul of our hope and trust, and whenever we saw that, with its back to us and its face to the fight, we knew that all was well. At last a great shout went up—a joyous roar of shoutings, in fact—and that was sign sufficient that the faubourgs were ours.

Yes, they were ours; the enemy had been driven back within the walls. On the ground which Joan had won, we camped; for night was coming on.

Joan sent a summons to the English, promising that if they surrendered she would allow them to go in peace and take their horses with them. Nobody knew that she could take that strong place, but she knew it—knew it well; yet she offered that grace—offered it in a time when such a thing was unknown in war; in a time when it was custom and usage to massacre the garrison and the inhabitants of captured cities without pity or compunction—yes, even to the harmless women and children sometimes. There are neighbours all about you who well remember the unspeakable atrocities which Charles the Bold inflicted upon the men and women and children of Dinant when he took that place some years ago. It was a unique and kindly grace which Joan offered that garrison; but that was her

way, that was her loving and merciful nature—she always did her best to save her enemy's life and his soldierly pride when she had the mastery of him.

The English asked fifteen days' armistice to consider the proposal in. And Fastolfe coming with 5,000 men! Joan said no. But she offered another grace: they might take both their horses and their side-arms—but they must go within the hour.

Well, those bronzed English veterans were pretty hard-headed folk. They declined again. Then Joan gave command that her army be made ready to move to the assault at nine in the morning. Considering the deal of marching and fighting which the men had done that day, D'Alençon thought the hour rather early; but Joan said it was best so, and so must be obeyed. Then she burst out with one of those enthusiasms which were always burning in her when battle was imminent, and said:

'Work! work! and God will work with us!'

Yes, one might say that her motto was 'Work! Stick to it; keep on working!' for in war she never knew what indolence was. And whoever will take that motto and live by it will be likely to succeed. There's many a way to win in this world, but none of them is worth much without good hard work back of it.

I think we should have lost our big Standard-Bearer that day, if our bigger Dwarf had not been at hand to bring him out of the *mêlée* when he was wounded. He was unconscious, and would have been trampled to death by our own horse, if the Dwarf had not promptly rescued him and haled him to the rear and safety. He recovered, and was himself again after two or three hours; and then he was happy and proud, and made the most of his wound, and went swaggering around in his bandages showing off like an innocent big child—which was just what he was. He was prouder of being wounded than a really modest person would be of being killed. But there was no harm in his vanity, and nobody minded it. He said he was hit by a stone from a catapult—a stone the size of a man's head. But

the stone grew, of course. Before he got through with it he was claiming that the enemy had flung a building at him.

'Let him alone,' said Noel Rainguesson. 'Don't interrupt his processes. To-morrow it will be a cathedral.'

He said that privately. And, sure enough to-morrow it *was* a cathedral. I never saw anybody with such an abandoned imagination.

* * *

Joan was abroad at the crack of dawn, galloping here and there and yonder, examining the situation minutely, and choosing what she considered the most effective positions for her artillery; and with such accurate judgment did she place her guns that her Lieutenant-General's admiration of it still survived in his memory when his testimony was taken at the Rehabilitation, a quarter of a century later.

In this testimony the Duke d'Alençon said that at Jargeau that morning of the 12th of June she made her dispositions not like a novice, but 'with the sure and clear judgment of a trained general of twenty or thirty years' experience.'

The veteran captains of the armies of France said she was great in war in all ways, but greatest of all in her genius for posting and handling artillery.

Who taught the shepherd girl to do these marvels—she who could not read, and had had no opportunity to study the complex arts of war? I do not know any way to solve such a baffling riddle as that, there being no precedent for it, nothing in history to compare it with and examine it by. For in history there is no great general, however gifted, who arrived at success otherwise than through able teaching and hard study and some experience. It is a riddle which will never be guessed. I think these vast powers and capacities were born in her, and that she applied them by an intuition which could not err.

At eight o'clock all movements ceased, and with it all

sounds, all noise, A mute expectancy reigned. The stillness was something awful—because it meant so much. There was no air stirring. The flags on the towers and ramparts hung straight down like tassels. Wherever one saw a person, that person had stopped what he was doing, and was in a waiting attitude, a listening attitude. We were on a commanding spot, clustered around Joan. Not far from us, on every hand, were the lanes and humble dwellings of these outlying suburbs. Many people were visible—all were listening, not one was moving. A man had placed a nail; he was about to fasten something with it to the door-post of his shop—but he had stopped. There was his hand reaching up holding the nail; and there was his other hand in the act of striking with the hammer; but he had forgotten everything—his head was turned aside, listening. Even children unconsciously stopped in their play; I saw a little boy with his hoop-stick pointed slanting toward the ground in the act of steering the hoop around the corner; and so he had stopped and was listening—the hoop was rolling away, doing its own steering. I saw a young girl prettily framed in an open window, a watering-pot in her hand and window-boxes of red flowers under its spout—but the water had ceased to flow; the girl was listening. Everywhere were these impressive petrified forms; and everywhere was suspended movement and that awful stillness.

Joan of Arc raised her sword in the air. At the signal, the silence was torn to rags; cannon after cannon vomited flames and smoke and delivered its quaking thunders; and we saw answering tongues of fire dart from the towers and walls of the city, accompanied by answering deep thunders, and in a minute the walls and the towers disappeared, and in their place stood vast banks and pyramids of snowy smoke, motionless in the dead air. The startled girl dropped her watering-pot and clasped her hands together, and at that moment a stone cannon-ball crashed through her fair body.

The great artillery duel went on, each side hammering away with all its might; and it was splendid for smoke and noise,

and most exalting to one's spirits. The poor little town around about us suffered cruelly. The cannon-balls tore through its slight buildings, wrecking them as if they had been built of cards; and every moment or two one would see a huge rock come curving through the upper air above the smoke clouds and go plunging down through the roofs. Fire broke out, and columns of flame and smoke rose toward the sky.

Presently the artillery concussions changed the weather. The sky became overcast, and a strong wind rose and blew away the smoke that hid the English fortresses.

Then the spectacle was fine: turreted gray walls and towers, and streaming bright flags, and jets of red fire and gushes of white smoke in long rows, all standing out with sharp vividness against the deep leaden background of the sky; and then the whizzing missiles began to knock up the dirt all around us, and I felt no more interest in the scenery. There was one English gun that was getting our position down finer and finer all the time. Presently Joan pointed to it and said:

'Fair Duke, step out of your tracks, or that machine will kill you.'

The Duke d'Alençon did as he was bid; but Monsieur du Lude rashly took his place, and that cannon tore his head off in a moment.

Joan was watching all along for the right time to order the assault. At last, about nine o'clock, she cried out:

'Now—to the assault!' and the buglers blew the charge.

Instantly we saw the body of men that had been appointed to this service move forward toward a point where the concentrated fire of our guns had crumbled the upper half of a broad stretch of wall to ruins; we saw this force descend into the ditch and begin to plant the scaling-ladders. We were soon with them. The Lieutenant-General thought the assault premature. But Joan said:

'Ah, gentle Duke, are you afraid? Do you not know that I have promised to send you home safe?'

It was warm work in the ditches. The walls were crowded

with men, and they poured avalanches of stones down upon us. There was one gigantic Englishman who did us more hurt than any dozen of his brethren. He always dominated the places easiest of assault, and flung down exceedingly troublesome big stones which smashed men and ladders both—then he would near burst himself with laughing over what he had done. But the Duke settled accounts with him. He went and found the famous cannoneer Jean le Lorrain, and said:

‘Train your gun—kill me this demon.’

He did it with the first shot. He hit the Englishman fair in the breast and knocked him backwards into the city.

The enemy’s resistance was so effective and so stubborn that our people began to show signs of doubt and dismay. Seeing this, Joan raised her inspiring battle-cry and descended into the fosse herself, the Dwarf helping her and the Paladin sticking bravely at her side with the standard. She started up a scaling-ladder, but a great stone flung from above came crashing down upon her helmet and stretched her, wounded and stunned, upon the ground. But only for a moment. The Dwarf stood her upon her feet, and straightway she started up the ladder again, crying:

‘To the assault, friends, to the assault—the English are ours! It is the appointed hour!’

There was a grand rush, and a fierce roar of war-cries, and we swarmed over the ramparts like ants. The garrison fled, we pursued; Jargeau was ours!

The Earl of Suffolk was hemmed in and surrounded, and the Duke d’Alençon and the Bastard of Orleans demanded that he surrender himself. But he was a proud nobleman and came of a proud race. He refused to yield his sword to subordinates, saying:

‘I will die rather. I will surrender to the Maid of Orleans alone, and to no other.’

And so he did; and was courteously and honourably used by her.

His two brothers retreated, fighting step by step, toward

the bridge, we pressing their despairing forces and cutting them down by scores. Arrived on the bridge, the slaughter still continued. Alexander de la Pole was pushed overboard or fell over, and was drowned. Eleven hundred men had fallen; John de la Pole decided to give up the struggle. But he was nearly as proud and particular as his brother of Suffolk as to whom he would surrender to. The French officer nearest at hand was Guillaume Renault, who was pressing him closely. Sir John said to him: 'Are you a gentleman?' 'Yes.'

'And a knight?' 'No' Then Sir John knighted him himself, there on the bridge, giving him the accolade with English coolness and tranquillity in the midst of that storm of slaughter and mutilation; and then bowing with high courtesy took the sword by the blade and laid the hilt of it in the man's hand in token of surrender. Ah, yes, a proud tribe, those De la Poles.

It was a grand day, a memorable day, a most splendid victory. We had a crowd of prisoners, but Joan would not allow them to be hurt. We took them with us and marched into Orleans next day through the usual tempest of welcome and joy.

And this time there was a new tribute to our leader. From everywhere in the packed streets the new recruits squeezed their way to her side to touch the sword of Joan of Arc and draw from it somewhat of that mysterious quality which made it invincible.

(After this victory, and with the English in retreat, Joan manages to get several strongholds to surrender in a few days. But now is the time for the most important confrontation which will decide of the future turn of events for France...)

When the morning broke at last on that for ever memorable 18th of June, there was no enemy discoverable anywhere, as I have said. But that did not trouble me. I knew we

should find him, and that we should strike him; strike him the promised blow—the one from which the English power in France would not rise up in a thousand years, as Joan had said in her trance.

The enemy had plunged into the wide plains of La Beauce—a roadless waste covered with bushes, with here and there bodies of forest trees—a region where an army would be hidden from view in a very little while. We found the trail in the soft wet earth and followed it. It indicated an orderly march; no confusion, no panic.

But we had to be cautious. In such a piece of country we could walk into an ambush without any trouble. Therefore Joan sent bodies of cavalry ahead under La Hire, Poton, and other captains, to feel the way. Some of the other officers began to show uneasiness; this sort of hide-and-go-seek business troubled them and made their confidence a little shaky. Joan divined their state of mind and cried out impetuously:

‘Name of God, what would you? We must smite these English, and we will. They shall not escape us. Though they were hung to the clouds we would get them!’

By-and-by we were nearing Patay; it was about a league away. Now at this time our reconnoissance, feeling its way in the bush, frightened a deer, and it went bounding away and was out of sight in a moment. Then hardly a minute later a dull great shout went up in the distance toward Patay. It was the English soldiery. They had been shut up in garrison so long on mouldy food that they could not keep their delight to themselves when this fine fresh meat came springing into their midst. Poor creature, it had wrought damage to a nation which loved it well. For the French knew where the English were, now, whereas the English had no suspicion of where the French were.

La Hire halted where he was, and sent back the tidings. Joan was radiant with joy. The Duke d’Alençon said to her:

‘Very well, we have found them; shall we fight them?’

‘Have you good spurs, Prince?’

'Why? Will they make us run away?'

'Nenni, en nom de Dieu! These English are ours—they are lost. They will fly. Who overtakes them will need good spurs. Forward—close up!'

By the time we had come up with La Hire the English had discovered our presence. Talbot's force was marching in three bodies. First his advance-guard; then his artillery; then his battle corps a good way in the rear. He was now out of the bush and in a fair open country. He at once posted his artillery, his advance-guard, and five hundred picked archers along some hedges where the French would be obliged to pass, and hoped to hold this position till his battle corps could come up. Sir John Fastolfe urged the battle corps into a gallop. Joan saw her opportunity and ordered La Hire to advance—which La Hire promptly did, launching his wild riders like a storm-wind, his customary fashion.

The Duke and the Bastard wanted to follow, but Joan said: 'Not yet—wait.'

So they waited—impatiently, and fidgeting in their saddles. But she was steady—gazing straight before her, measuring, weighing, calculating—by shades, minutes, fractions of minutes, seconds—with all her great soul present, in eye, and set of head, and noble pose of body—but patient, steady, master of herself—master of herself and of the situation.

And yonder, receding, receding, plumes lifting and falling, lifting and falling, streamed the thundering charge of La Hire's godless crew, La Hire's great figure dominating it and his sword stretched aloft like a flag-staff.

'O Satan and his Hellions, see them go!' Somebody muttered it in deep admiration.

And now he was closing up—closing up on Fastolfe's rushing corps.

And now he struck it—struck it hard, and broke its order. It lifted the Duke and the Bastard in their saddles to see it; and they turned, trembling with excitement, to Joan, saying:

'Now!'

But she put up her hand, still gazing, weighing, calculating, and said again:

‘Wait—not yet.’

Fastolfe’s hard-driven battle corps raged on like an avalanche toward the waiting advance-guard. Suddenly these conceived the idea that it was flying in panic before Joan; and so in that instant it broke and swarmed away in a mad panic itself, with Talbot storming and cursing after it.

Now was the golden time. Joan drove her spurs home and waved the advance with her sword. ‘Follow me!’ she cried, and bent her head to her horse’s neck and sped away like the wind!

We swept down into the confusion of that flying rout, and for three long hours we cut and hacked and stabbed. At last the bugles sang ‘Halt!’

The Battle of Patay was won.

Joan of Arc dismounted, and stood surveying that awful field, lost in thought. Presently she said:

‘The praise is to God. He has smitten with a heavy hand this day.’ After a little she lifted her face, and looking afar off, said, with the manner of one who is thinking aloud, ‘In a thousand years—a thousand years—the English power in France will not rise up from this blow.’ She stood again a time, thinking, then she turned toward her generals, and there was a glory in her face and a noble light in her eye; and she said:

‘O friends, friends, do you know?—do you comprehend?
France is on the way to be free!’

‘And had never been, but for Joan of Arc!’ said La Hire, passing before her and bowing low, the others following and doing likewise; he muttering as he went, ‘I will say it though I be damned for it.’ Then battalion after battalion of our victorious army swung by, wildly cheering. And they shouted ‘Live for ever, Maid of Orleans, live for ever!’ while Joan, smiling, stood at the salute with her sword.

This was not the last time I saw the Maid of Orleans on the red field of Patay. Toward the end of the day I came upon her where the dead and dying lay stretched all about in heaps and

winrows; our men had mortally wounded an English prisoner who was too poor to pay a ransom, and from a distance she had seen that cruel thing done; and had galloped to the place and sent for a priest, and now she was holding the head of her dying enemy in her lap, and easing him to his death with comforting soft words, just as his sister might have done; and the womanly tears running down her face all the time.*

* * *

Joan had said true: France was on the way to be free.

The war called the Hundred Years' War was very sick to-day. Sick on its English side—for the very first time since its birth, ninety-one years gone by.

Shall we judge battles by the numbers killed and the ruin wrought? Or shall we not rather judge them by the results which flowed from them? Any one will say that a battle is only truly great or small according to its results. Yes, any one will grant that, for it is the truth.

Judged by results, Patay's place is with the few supremely great and imposing battles that have been fought since the peoples of the world first resorted to arms for the settlement of their quarrels. So judged, it is even possible that Patay has no peer among that few just mentioned, but stands alone, as the supremest of historic conflicts. For when it began France lay gasping out the remnant of an exhausted life, her case wholly hopeless in the view of all political physicians; when it ended, three hours later, she was convalescent. Convalescent, and nothing requisite but time and ordinary nursing to bring her back to perfect health. The dullest physician of them all

* Lord Ronald Gower (*Joan of Arc*, p. 82) says: 'Michelet discovered this story in the deposition of Joan of Arc's page, Louis de Conte, who was probably an eye-witness of the scene.' This is true. It was a part of the testimony of the author of these *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, given by him in the Rehabilitation proceedings of 1456.—*Translator*.

could see this, and there was none to deny it.

Many death-sick nations have reached convalescence through a series of battles, a procession of battles, a weary tale of wasting conflicts stretching over years; but only one has reached it in a single day and by a single battle. That nation is France, and that battle Patay.

Remember it and be proud of it; for you are French, and it is the stateliest fact in the long annals of your country. There it stands, with its head in the clouds! And when you grow up you will go on pilgrimage to the field of Patay, and stand uncovered in the presence of—what? A monument with its head in the clouds? Yes. For all nations in all times have built monuments on their battlefields to keep green the memory of the perishable deed that was wrought there and of the perishable name of him who wrought it; and will France neglect Patay and Joan of Arc? Not for long. And will she build a monument scaled to their rank as compared with the world's other fields and heroes? Perhaps—if there be room for it under the arch of the sky.

But let us look back a little, and consider certain strange and impressive facts. The Hundred Years' War began in 1337. It raged on and on, year after year and year after year; and at last England stretched France prone with that fearful blow at Crécy. But she rose and struggled on year after year, and at last again she went down under another devastating blow—Poitiers. She gathered her crippled strength once more, and the war raged on, and on, and still on, year after year, decade after decade. Children were born, grew up, married, died—the war raged on; their children in turn grew up, married, died—the war raged on; their children, growing, saw France struck down again; this time under the incredible disaster of Agincourt—and still the war raged on, year after year, and in time these children married in their turn.

France was a wreck, a ruin, a desolation. The half of it belonged to England, with none to dispute or deny the truth; the other half belonged to nobody—in three months would be

flying the English flag: the French King was making ready to throw away his crown and flee beyond the seas.

Now came the ignorant country maid out of her remote village and confronted this hoary war, this all-consuming conflagration that had swept the land for three generations. Then began the briefest and most amazing campaign that is recorded in history. In seven weeks it was finished. In seven weeks she hopelessly crippled that gigantic war that was ninety-one years old. At Orleans she struck it a staggering blow; on the field of Patay she broke its back.

Think of it. Yes, one can do that; but understand it? Ah, that is another matter; none will ever be able to comprehend that stupefying marvel.

Seven weeks—with here and there a little bloodshed. Perhaps the most of it, in any single fight, at Patay, where the English began six thousand strong and left two thousand dead upon the field. It is said and believed that in three battles alone—Crecy, Poitiers, and Agincourt—near a hundred thousand Frenchmen fell, without counting the thousand other fights of that long war. The dead of that war make a mournful long list—an interminable list. Of men slain in the field the count goes by tens of thousands; of innocent women and children slain by bitter hardship and hunger, it goes by that appalling term, millions.

It was an ogre, that war; an ogre that went about for near a hundred years, crunching men and dripping blood from his jaws. And with her little hand that child of seventeen struck him down; and yonder he lies stretched on the field of Patay, and will not get up any more while this old world lasts.

* * *

The great news of Patay was carried over the whole of France in twenty hours, people said. I do not know as to that; but one thing is sure, anyway: the moment a man got it he flew

shouting and glorifying God and told his neighbour; and that neighbour flew with it to the next homestead; and so on and so on, without resting, the word travelled; and when a man got it in the night, at what hour soever, he jumped out of his bed and bore the blessed message along. And the joy that went with it was like the light that flows across the land when an eclipse is receding from the face of the sun; and indeed you may say that France had lain in an eclipse this long time; yes, buried in a black gloom which these beneficent-tidings were sweeping away, now, before the onrush of their white splendour.

The news beat the flying enemy to Yeuville, and the town rose against its English masters and shut the gates against their brethren. It flew to Mont Pipeau, to Saint-Simon, and to this, that, and the other English fortress; and straightway the garrison applied the torch and took to the fields and the woods. A detachment of our army occupied Meung and pillaged it.

When we reached Orleans that town was as much as fifty times insaner with joy than we had ever seen it before—which is saying much. Night had just fallen, and the illuminations were on so wonderful a scale that we seemed to plough through seas of fire; and as to the noise—the hoarse cheering of the multitude, the thundering of cannon, the clash of bells—indeed there was never anything like it. And everywhere rose a new cry that burst upon us like a storm when the column entered the gates, and nevermore ceased: ‘Welcome to Joan of Arc—way for the SAVIOUR OF FRANCE!’ And there was another cry: ‘Crecy is avenged! Poitiers is avenged! Agincourt is avenged!—Patay shall live for ever!’

(After the defeat of Sir John Fastolfe at Patay, with joy and thanks-giving, the dauphin welcomed the victorious maid at Lyons.

Now, she felt, her hour had come. She would lead Charles to Rheims, and there crown him according to the traditions of nine hundred years. Then, an

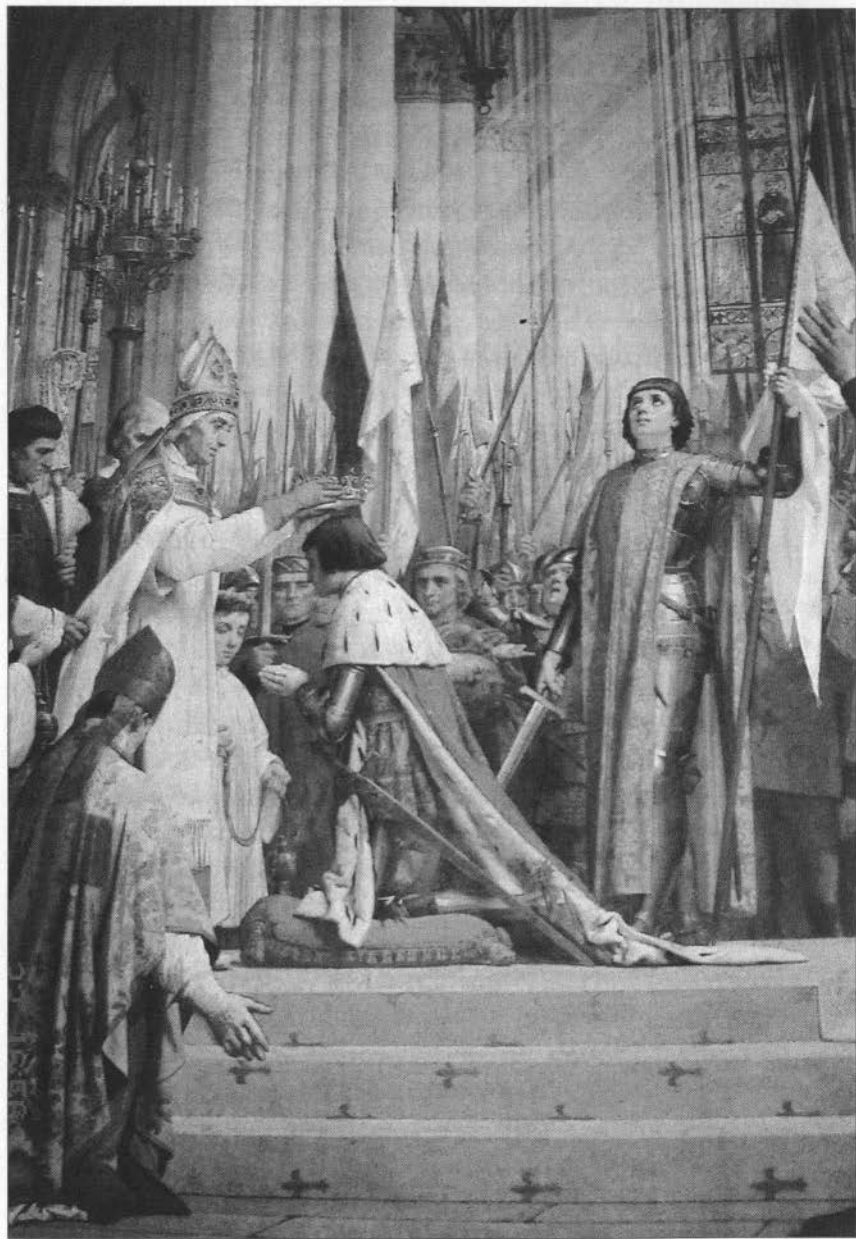
anointed king, he would, with her help, take possession of his capital, and drive the English from the soil of France.

The march through Burgundian country to Rheims was accomplished in triumph. Auxerre surrendered at once, Troyes submitted after a show of force, and on July 14, the royal cavalcade reached its destination. Two days later the Abbot of St. Remy brought the sacred oil, with which every French king since the legendary Pharamond had been anointed, and Joan knelt by the side of Charles as the Archbishop Regnault de Chartres, Primate of France, placed the crown upon his head.

"Gentle king," she cried, "now is the pleasure of God fulfilled, Whose will it was that I should raise the siege of Orleans and lead you to this city of Rheims to receive your consecration. Now has He shown that you are true king, and that the kingdom of France truly belongs to you alone."

Her destiny was fulfilled. She had touched the highest point of her glory. Thenceforward, though her spirit remained undimmed to the end, she was to meet, through no fault of her own, with nothing but failure. Charles, who had been inspired and awakened from his lethargy by the maid's enthusiasm, now fell back into his customary state of indecision and vacillation. Joan never ceased to urge an immediate assault on Paris, but the king chose rather to indulge in fruitless negotiations with Philippe of Burgundy, endeavouring to detach the duke from the English cause. Meanwhile, Compiègne, Senlis and Beauvais submitted to the royal army, and from the last place the bishop, Pierre Cauchon, was expelled. Not long afterwards he was to be the moving spirit in the trial of Joan of Arc.

At last Joan got her way, and was allowed to attack



Coronation of Charles in front of Joan (painting by Lenepveu)

Paris. But the assault was a miserable failure. Charles was scheming behind her back. He was afraid of offending Burgundy, and he allowed her insufficient troops. Her courage and leadership was as great as ever, but she was alone. Everyone else was half-hearted. She was wounded in the encounter, and the assault on the Porte Saint Honoré was beaten off.

Charles now ennobled Joan and her family, and granted her village relief from taxation, but he would not grant her what she wanted—troops to complete the recovery of France, She chafed at the inactivity, and when at last she heard that the English and Burgundians were marching against “her good friends of Compiègne,” she insisted on riding forth to help them. In a sally outside the town she was captured by John of Luxembourg and, at the instigation of the infamous Cauchon, thirsty for revenge, she was sold to the English, who regarded her as a witch and intended her to be tried by the Court of the Church known as the Inquisition which in this case was largely composed of French bishops. If she were condemned by an ecclesiastical court she would be discredited, thought the English, in the eyes of those who now thought her a saint. She would then cease to be an inspiration.

Accordingly she was brought to Rouen, and there put on trial for heresy and witchcraft before a tribunal composed of forty carefully selected theologians, presided over by her arch-enemy, Cauchon, and the vice-inquisitor, Jean Lemaistre. Between the time of her capture and her death a year elapsed, but during that period Charles lifted not a finger to save her.

There is no need to enter into the details of the trial. It was one of the most appalling travesties of justice ever seen, in spite of modern attempts in certain quarters to prove the contrary. For weeks on end, first

in public, then in the prison, where she was guarded by blackguardly soldiers, she was subjected to remorseless interrogations and innumerable charges, many of them childish and trivial. Twelve points were alleged against her, the most important being that her visions were of the devil, that her prophecies were false, that she shamed her sex by wearing male attire, and that she claimed to appeal to God over the heads of the Church.

Cauchon's only purpose was to procure a confession of guilt, and a judge who declared the proceedings illegal was expelled from the court. Above all, Joan's demand to be allowed to appeal to the pope was ignored.

Through all the tragic farce Joan's composure remained undisturbed and her country wit frequently disconcerted the learned examiners. ... To the ever-repeated, charge of immodesty and defiance in continuing to wear a man's dress, she pointed out with simple common sense that, being as she was in prison, at the mercy of lewd English soldiers, it was a mere act of prudence.

But Cauchon won the day. Through various tricks, he managed to get her proclaimed a relapsed heretic, and she was condemned to the stake.

The last scene took place in the market square of Rouen on May 30, 1431. After receiving communion, she was handed over to the secular arm and led to her death. She asked for a cross, and a soldier gave her two pieces of stick tied together. And then the cross was fetched from a neighbouring church and was held before her eyes as she died. As the flames gathered around her she kissed the cross in her hands and cried out the one word, "Jesus!" Then she spoke no more.

Her heart was found unburned in the pyre. Her ashes were thrown in the Seine from the bridge of Rouen.

A very remarkable fact, rare occurrence in History, is that, twenty-five years later, her memory was publicly rehabilitated at a trial held at the instance of Charles VII, and the judgment of Cauchon was annulled. The Rehabilitation Trial thus provides historians a unique source to verify the facts, as reported by still living witnesses, of the incredible story of Joan of Arc, which, otherwise, might have been perceived, in the mist and fog of these ancient, poorly documented times, as not much more than a beautiful legend.

Nearly five hundred years afterwards, in 1919, Pope Benedict XV raised the peasant maid of Domremy to the altars of the Catholic Church among the saints of God.

Lamartine, the great French poet, says of her: "Joan of Arc, the prophetess, the heroine, and the saint of French patriotism, the glory, the deliverance, and equally the shame of her country.... Angel, maiden, warrior—she has become a fit blazon for the soldier's banner.")

adapted from the chapter "Jeanne d'Arc" in *100 Great Lives*,
edited by John Canning, Rupa 1984)



Joan's signature as found on a few
rare documents

(An essay written in 1904 by Mark Twain is given below, which clearly shows his deep admiration and devotion for Joan of Arc. This essay brings out vividly the extraordinary nature of Joan's achievements, which are also among the best documented facts in history)

SAINT JOAN OF ARC

An essay by Mark Twain

The evidence furnished at the Trials and Rehabilitation sets forth Joan of Arc's strange and beautiful history in clear and minute detail. Among all the multitude of biographies that freight the shelves of the world's libraries, this is the only one whose validity is confirmed to us by oath. It gives us a vivid picture of a career and a personality of so extraordinary a character that we are helped to accept them as actualities by the very fact that both are beyond the inventive reach of fiction. The public part of the career occupied only a mere breath of time—it covered but two years; but what a career it was! The personality which made it possible is one to be reverently studied, loved, and marveled at, but not to be wholly understood and accounted for by even the most searching analysis.*

* Note. — The Official Record of the Trials and Rehabilitation of Joan of Arc is the most remarkable history that exists in any language; yet there are few people in the world who can say they have read it: in England and America it has hardly been heard of. Three hundred years ago Shakespeare did not know the true story of Joan of Arc; in his day it was unknown even in France. For four hundred years it existed rather as a vaguely defined romance than as definite and authentic history. The true story remained buried in the official archives of France from the Rehabilitation of 1456 until Quicherat [*a well known French historian in the 19th century*] dug it out and gave it to the world two generations ago, in lucid and understandable modern French. It is a deeply fascinating story. But only in the Official Trials and Rehabilitation can it be found in its entirety. — M.T.

In Joan of Arc at the age of sixteen there was no promise of a romance. She lived in a dull little village on the frontiers of civilization: she had been nowhere and had seen nothing; she knew none but simple shepherd folk; she had never seen a person of note; she hardly knew what a soldier looked like; she had never ridden a horse, nor had a warlike weapon in her hand; she could neither read nor write: she could spin and sew; she knew her catechism and her prayers and the fabulous histories of the saints, and this was all her learning. That was Joan at sixteen. What did she know of law? of evidence? of courts? of the attorney's trade? of legal procedure? Nothing. Less than nothing. Thus exhaustively equipped with ignorance, she went before the court at Toul to contest a false charge of breach of promise of marriage; she conducted her cause herself, without any one's help or advice or any one's friendly sympathy, and won it. She called no witnesses of her own, but vanquished the prosecution by using with deadly effectiveness its own testimony. The astonished judge threw the case out of court, and spoke of her as "this marvelous child."

She went to the veteran Commandant of Vaucouleurs and demanded an escort of soldiers, saying she must march to the help of the King of France, since she was commissioned of God to win back his lost kingdom for him and set the crown upon his head. The Commandant said, "What, you? You are only a child." And he advised that she be taken back to her village and have her ears boxed. But she said she must obey God, and would come again, and again, and yet again, and finally she would get the soldiers. She said truly. In time he yielded, after months of delay and refusal, and gave her the soldiers; and took off his sword and gave her that, and said, "Go—and let come what may." She made her long and perilous journey through the enemy's country, and spoke with the King, and convinced him. Then she was summoned before the University of Poitiers to prove that she was commissioned of God and not of Satan, and daily during three weeks she sat

before that learned congress unafraid, and capably answered their deep questions out of her ignorant but able head and her simple and honest heart; and again she won her case, and with it the wondering admiration of all that august company.

And now, aged seventeen, she was made Commander-in-Chief, with a prince of the royal house and the veteran generals of France for subordinates; and at the head of the first army she had ever seen, she marched to Orleans, carried the commanding fortresses of the enemy by storm in three desperate assaults, and in ten days raised a siege which had defied the might of France for seven months.

After a tedious and insane delay caused by the King's instability of character and the treacherous counsels of his ministers, she got permission to take the field again. She took Jargeau by storm; then Meung; she forced Beaugency to surrender; then—in the open field—she won the memorable victory of Patay against Talbot, "the English lion," and broke the back of the Hundred Years' War. It was a campaign which cost but seven weeks of time; yet the political results would have been cheap if the time expended had been fifty years. Patay, that unsung and now long-forgotten battle, was the Moscow of the English power in France; from the blow struck that day it was destined never to recover. It was the beginning of the end of an alien dominion which had ridden France intermittently for three hundred years.

Then followed the great campaign of the Loire, the capture of Troyes by assault, and the triumphal march past surrendering towns and fortresses to Rheims, where Joan put the crown upon her King's head in the Cathedral, amid wild public rejoicings, and with her old peasant father there to see these things and believe his eyes if he could. She had restored the crown and the lost sovereignty; the King was grateful for once in his shabby poor life, and asked her to name her reward and have it. She asked for nothing for herself, but begged that the taxes of her native village might be remitted forever. The prayer was granted, and the promise kept for three hundred



Joan of Arc by the French painter Ingres

and sixty years. Then it was broken, and remains broken to-day. France was very poor then, she is very rich now; but she has been collecting those taxes for more than a hundred years.

Joan asked one other favor: that now that her mission was fulfilled she might be allowed to go back to her village and take up her humble life again with her mother and the friends of her childhood; for she had no pleasure in the cruelties of war, and the sight of blood and suffering wrung her heart. Sometimes in battle she did not draw her sword, lest in the splendid madness of the onset she might forget herself and take an enemy's life with it. In the Rouen Trials, one of her quaintest speeches—coming from the gentle and girlish source it did—was her naive remark that she had “never killed any one.” Her prayer for leave to go back to the rest and peace of her village home was not granted.

Then she wanted to march at once upon Paris, take it, and drive the English out of France. She was hampered in all the ways that treachery and the King's vacillation could devise, but she forced her way to Paris at last, and fell badly wounded in a successful assault upon one of the gates. Of course her men lost heart a once—she was the only heart they had. They fell back. She begged to be allowed to remain at the front, saying victory was sure. “I will take Paris now or die!” she said. But she was removed from the field by force; the King ordered a retreat, and actually disbanded his army. In accordance with a beautiful old military custom Joan devoted her silver armor and hung it up in the Cathedral of St. Denis. Its great days were over.

Then, by command, she followed the King and his frivolous court and endured a gilded captivity for a time, as well as her free spirit could; and whenever inaction became unbearable she gathered some men together and rode away and assaulted a stronghold and captured it.

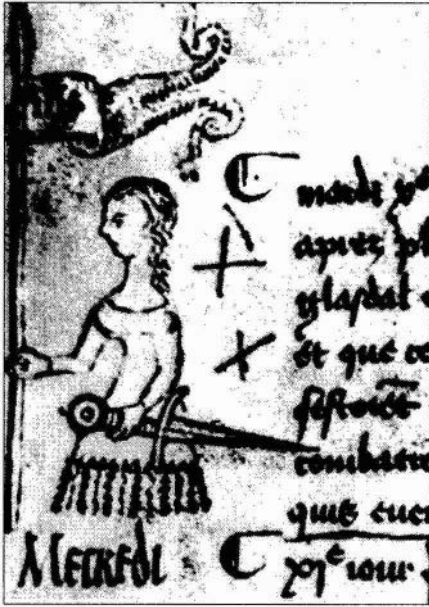
At last in a sortie against the enemy, from Compiègne, on the 24th of May (when she was turned eighteen), she was herself captured, after a gallant fight. It was her last battle. She

was to follow the drums no more. Thus ended the briefest epoch-making military career known to history. It lasted only a year and a month, but it found France an English province, and furnishes the reason that France is France to-day and not an English province still. Thirteen months! It was, indeed, a short career; but in the centuries that have since elapsed five hundred millions of Frenchmen have lived and died blest by the benefactions it conferred; and so long as France shall endure, the mighty debt must grow. And France is grateful; we often hear her say it. Also thrifty: she collects the Domremy taxes.

II

Joan was fated to spend the rest of her life behind bolts and bars. She was a prisoner of war, not a criminal, therefore hers was recognized as an honorable captivity. By the rules of war she must be held to ransom, and a fair price could not be refused if offered. John of Luxembourg paid her the just compliment of requiring a prince's ransom for her. In that day that phrase represented a definite sum—61,125 francs. It was, of course, supposable that either the King or grateful France, or both, would fly with the money and set their fair young benefactor free. But this did not happen. In five and a half months neither King nor country stirred a hand nor offered a penny. Twice Joan tried to escape. Once by a trick she succeeded for a moment, and locked her jailer in behind her, but she was discovered and caught; in the other case she let herself down from a tower sixty feet high, but her rope was too short, and she got a fall that disabled her and she could not get away.

Finally, Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, paid the money and bought Joan—ostensibly for the Church, to be tried for wearing male attire and for other impieties, but really for the English, the enemy into whose hands the poor girl was so piteously anxious not to fall. She was now shut up in the dungeons of the Castle of Rouen and kept in an iron cage, with



The only surviving image of Joan of Arc, drawn by an eye-witness. While recording the raising of the siege of Orleans for the register of the Paris Parliament, a clerk drew this picture.

her hands and feet and neck chained to a pillar; and from that time forth during all the months of her imprisonment, till the end, several rough English soldiers stood guard over her night and day—and not outside her room, but in it. It was a dreary and hideous captivity, but it did not conquer her: nothing could break that invincible spirit. From first to last she was a prisoner a year; and she spent the last three months of it on trial for her life before a formidable array of ecclesiastical judges, and disputing the ground with them foot by foot and inch by inch with brilliant generalship and dauntless pluck. The spectacle of that solitary girl, forlorn and friendless, without advocate or adviser, and without the help and guidance of any copy of the charges brought against her or rescript of the complex and voluminous daily proceedings of the court to modify the crushing strain upon her astonishing memory, fighting that long battle serene and undismayed against these colossal odds, stands alone in its pathos and its sublimity; it has nowhere its

mate, either in the annals of fact or in the inventions of fiction.

And how fine and great were the things she daily said, how fresh and crisp—and she so worn in body, so starved, and tired, and harried! They run through the whole gamut of feeling and expression—from scorn and defiance, uttered with soldierly fire and frankness, all down the scale to wounded dignity clothed in words of noble pathos; as when her patience was exhausted by the pestering delvings and gropings and searchings of her persecutors to find out what kind of devil's witchcraft she had employed to rouse the war spirit in her timid soldiers, she burst out with, "What I said was, 'Ride these English down'—and I did it myself!" and as, when insultingly asked why it was that her standard had place at the crowning of the King in the Cathedral of Rheims rather than the standards of the other captains, she uttered that touching speech, "It had borne the burden, it had earned the honor"—a phrase which fell from her lips without premeditation, yet whose moving beauty and simple grace it would bankrupt the arts of language to surpass.

Although she was on trial for her life, she was the only witness called on either side; the only witness summoned to testify before a packed jury commissioned with a definite task: to find her guilty, whether she was guilty or not. She must be convicted out of her own mouth, there being no other way to accomplish it. Every advantage that learning has over ignorance, age over youth, experience over inexperience, chicane over artlessness, every trick and trap and gin devisable by malice and the cunning of sharp intellects practised in setting snares for the unwary—all these were employed against her without shame; and when these arts were one by one defeated by the marvelous intuitions of her alert and penetrating mind, Bishop Cauchon stooped to a final baseness which it degrades human speech to describe: a priest who pretended to come from the region of her own home and to be a pitying friend and anxious to help her in her sore need was smuggled into her cell, and he misused his sacred office to steal her confidence;

she confided to him the things sealed from revelation by her Voices, and which her prosecutors had tried so long in vain to trick her into betraying. A concealed confederate set it all down and delivered it to Cauchon, who used Joan's secrets, thus obtained, for her ruin.

Throughout the Trials, whatever the foredoomed witness said was twisted from its true meaning when possible, and made to tell against her; and whenever an answer of hers was beyond the reach of twisting it was not allowed to go upon the record. It was upon one of these latter occasions that she uttered that pathetic reproach—to Cauchon: "Ah, you set down everything that is against me, but you will not set down what is for me."

That this untrained young creature's genius for war was wonderful, and her generalship worthy to rank with the ripe products of a tried and trained military experience, we have the sworn testimony of two of her veteran subordinates—one, the Duc d'Alençon, the other the greatest of the French generals of the time, Dunois, Bastard of Orleans; that her genius was as great—possibly even greater—in the subtle warfare of the forum we have for witness the records of the Rouen Trials, that protracted exhibition of intellectual fence maintained with credit against the masterminds of France; that her moral greatness was peer to her intellect we call the Rouen Trials again to witness, with their testimony to a fortitude which patiently and steadfastly endured during twelve weeks the wasting forces of captivity, chains, loneliness, sickness, darkness, hunger, thirst, cold, shame, insult, abuse, broken sleep, treachery, ingratitude, exhausting sieges of cross-examination, the threat of torture, with the rack before her and the executioner standing ready: yet never surrendering, never asking quarter, the frail wreck of her as unconquerable the last day as was her invincible spirit the first.

Great as she was in so many ways, she was perhaps even greatest of all in the lofty things just named—her patient endurance, her steadfastness, her granite fortitude. We may

not hope to easily find her mate and twin in these majestic qualities; where we lift our eyes highest we find only a strange and curious contrast—there in the captive eagle beating his broken wings on the Rock of St. Helena.

III

The Trials ended with her condemnation. But as she had conceded nothing, confessed nothing, this was victory for her, defeat for Cauchon. But his evil resources were not yet exhausted. She was persuaded to agree to sign a paper of slight import, then by treachery a paper was substituted which contained a recantation and a detailed confession of everything which had been charged against her during the Trials and denied and repudiated by her persistently during the three months; and this false paper she ignorantly signed. This was a victory for Cauchon. He followed it eagerly and pitilessly up by at once setting a trap for her which she could not escape. When she realized this she gave up the long struggle, denounced the treason which had been practised against her, repudiated the false confession, reasserted the truth of the testimony which she had given in the Trials, and went to her martyrdom with the peace of God in her tired heart, and on her lips endearing words and loving prayers for the cur she had crowned and the nation of ingrates she had saved.

When the fires rose about her and she begged for a cross for her dying lips to kiss, it was not a friend but an enemy, not a Frenchman but an alien, not a comrade in arms but an English soldier, that answered that pathetic prayer. He broke a stick across his knee, bound the pieces together in the form of the symbol she so loved, and gave it her; and his gentle deed is not forgotten, nor will be.



IV

Twenty-five years afterward the Process of Rehabilitation was instituted, there being a growing doubt as to the validity of a sovereignty that had been rescued and set upon its feet by a person who had been proven by the Church to be a witch and a familiar of evil spirits. Joan's old generals, her secretary, several aged relations and other villagers of Domremy, surviving judges and secretaries of the Rouen and Poitiers Processes—a cloud of witnesses, some of whom had been her enemies and persecutors—came and made oath and testified; and what they said was written down. In that sworn testimony the moving and beautiful history of Joan of Arc is laid bare, from her childhood to her martyrdom. From the verdict she rises stainlessly pure, in mind and heart, in speech and deed and spirit, and will so endure to the end of time.

She is the Wonder of the Ages. And when we consider her origin, her early circumstances, her sex, and that she did all the things upon which her renown rests while she was still a young girl, we recognize that while our race continues she will be also the Riddle of the Ages. When we set about accounting for a Napoleon or a Shakespeare or a Raphael or a Wagner or an Edison or other extraordinary person, we understand that the measure of his talent will not explain the whole result, nor even the largest part of it; no, it is the atmosphere in which the talent was cradled that explains; it is the training which it received while it grew, the nurture it got from reading, study, example, the encouragement it gathered from self-recognition and recognition from the outside at each stage of its development: when we know all these details, then we know why the man was ready when his opportunity came. We should expect Edison's surroundings and atmosphere to have the largest share in discovering him to himself and to the world; and we should expect him to live and die undiscovered in a land where an inventor could find no comradeship, no sympathy, no ambition-rousing atmosphere of recognition and applause—

Dahomey, for instance. Dahomey [a backward French colony in Africa at the time when Twain is writing] could not find an Edison out; in Dahomey an Edison could not find himself out. Broadly speaking, genius is not born with sight, but blind; and it is not itself that opens its eye, but the subtle influences of a myriad of stimulating exterior circumstances.

We all know this to be not a guess, but a mere commonplace fact, a truism. Lorraine was Joan of Arc's Dahomey. And there the Riddle confronts us. We can understand how she could be born with military genius, with leonine courage, with incomparable fortitude, with a mind which was in several particulars a prodigy—a mind which included among its specialties the lawyer's gift of detecting traps laid by the adversary in cunning and treacherous arrangements of seemingly innocent words, the orator's gift of eloquence, the advocate's gift of presenting a case in clear and compact form, the judge's gift of sorting and weighing evidence, and finally, something recognizable as more than a mere trace of the statesman's gift of understanding a political situation and how to make profitable use of such opportunities as it offers; we can comprehend how she could be born with these great qualities, but we cannot comprehend how they became immediately usable and effective without the developing forces of a sympathetic atmosphere and the training which comes of teaching, study, practice—years of practice—and the crowning and perfecting help of a thousand mistakes. We can understand how the possibilities of the future perfect peach are all lying hid in the humble bitter-almond, but we cannot conceive of the peach springing directly from the almond without the intervening long seasons of patient cultivation and development. Out of a cattle-pasturing peasant village lost in the remotenesses of an unvisited wilderness and atrophied with ages of stupefaction and ignorance we cannot see a Joan of Arc issue equipped to the last detail for her amazing career and hope to be able to explain the riddle of it, labor at it as we may.

It is beyond us. All the rules fail in this girl's case. In the

world's history she stands alone—quite alone. Others have been great in their first public exhibitions of generalship, valor, legal talent, diplomacy, fortitude; but always their previous years and associations had been in a larger or smaller degree a preparation for these things. There have been no exceptions to the rule. But Joan was competent in a law case at sixteen without ever having seen a law-book or a court-house before; she had no training in soldiership and no associations with it, yet she was a competent general in her first campaign; she was brave in her first battle, yet her courage had had no education—not even the education which a boy's courage gets from never-ceasing reminders that it is not permissible in a boy to be a coward, but only in a girl; friendless, alone, ignorant, in the blossom of her youth, she sat week after week, a prisoner in chains, before her assemblage of judges, enemies hunting her to her death, the ablest minds in France, and answered them out of an untaught wisdom which overmatched their learning, baffled their tricks and treacheries with a native sagacity which compelled their wonder, and scored every day a victory against these incredible odds and camped unchallenged on the field. In the history of the human intellect, untrained, inexperienced, and using only its birthright equipment of untried capacities, there is nothing which approaches this. Joan of Arc stands alone, and must continue to stand alone, by reason of the unfellowed fact that in the things wherein she was great she was so without shade or suggestion of help from preparatory teaching, practice, environment, or experience. There is no one to compare her with, none to measure her by; for all others among the illustrious grew toward their high place in an atmosphere and surroundings which discovered their gift to them and nourished it and promoted it, intentionally or unconsciously. There have been other young generals, but they were not girls; young generals, but they had been soldiers before they were generals; she began as a general; she commanded the first army she ever saw; she led it from victory to victory, and never lost a battle with it; there have been

young commanders-in-chief, but none so young as she: she is the only soldier in history who has held the supreme command of a nation's armies at the age of seventeen.

Her history has still another feature which sets her apart and leaves her without fellow or competitor: there have been many uninspired prophets, but she was the only one who ever ventured the daring detail of naming, along with a foretold event, the event's precise nature, the special time-limit within which it would occur, and the place—and scored fulfilment. At Vaucouleurs she said she must go to the King and be made his general, and break the English power, and crown her sovereign—"at Rheims." It all happened. It was all to happen "next year"—and it did. She foretold her first wound and its character and date a month in advance, and the prophecy was recorded in a public record-book three weeks in advance. She repeated it the morning of the date named, and it was fulfilled before night. At Tours she foretold the limit of her military career—saying it would end in one year from the time of its utterance—and she was right. She foretold her martyrdom—using that word, and naming a time three months away—and again she was right. At a time when France seemed hopelessly and permanently in the hands of the English she twice asserted in her prison before her judges that within seven years the English would meet with a mightier disaster than had been the fall of Orleans: it happened within five—the fall of Paris. Other prophecies of her came true, both as to the event named and the time-limit prescribed.

She was deeply religious, and believed that she had daily speech with angels; that she saw them face to face, and that they counseled her, comforted and heartened her, and brought commands to her direct from God. She had a childlike faith in the heavenly origin of her apparitions and her Voices, and not any threat of any form of death was able to frighten it out of her loyal heart. She was a beautiful and simple and lovable character. In the records of the Trials this comes out in clear and shining detail. She was gentle and winning and affection-

ate; she loved her home and friends and her village life; she was miserable in the presence of pain and suffering; she was full of compassion: on the field of her most splendid victory she forgot her triumphs to hold in her lap the head of a dying enemy and comfort his passing spirit with pitying words; in an age when it was common to slaughter prisoners she stood dauntless between them and harm, and saved them alive; she was forgiving, generous, unselfish, magnanimous; she was pure from all spot or stain of baseness. And always she was a girl; and dear and worshipful, as is meet for that estate: when she fell wounded, the first time, she was frightened, and cried when she saw her blood gushing from her breast; but she was Joan of Arc! and when presently she found that her generals were sounding the retreat, she staggered to her feet and led the assault again and took that place by storm.

There is no blemish in that rounded and beautiful character.

How strange it is!—that almost invariably the artist remembers only one detail—one minor and meaningless detail of the personality of Joan of Arc: to wit, that she was a peasant girl—and forgets all the rest; and so he paints her as a strapping middle-aged fishwoman, with costume to match, and in her face the spirituality of a ham. He is slave to his one idea, and forgets to observe that the supremely great souls are never lodged in gross bodies. No brawn, no muscle, could endure the work that their bodies must do; they do their miracles by the spirit which has fifty times the strength and staying-power of brawn and muscle. The Napoleons are little, not big; and they work twenty hours in the twenty-four, and come up fresh, while the big soldiers with the little hearts faint around them with fatigue. We know what Joan of Arc was like, without asking—merely by what she did. The artist should paint her spirit—then he could not fail to paint her body aright. She would rise before us, then, a vision to win us, not repel: a lithe young slender figure, instinct with “the unbought grace of youth,” dear and bonny and lovable, the face beautiful, and transfigured with the light of that lustrous intellect and the

fires of that unquenchable spirit.

Taking into account, as I have suggested before, all the circumstances—her origin, youth, sex, illiteracy, early environment, and the obstructing conditions under which she exploited her high gifts and made her conquests in the field and before the courts that tried her for her life—she is easily and by far the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced.





Renée Falconetti as Joan of Arc gave here one of the greatest performances ever recorded on film..



Clockwise starting from bottom left: Joan praying in her cell; Joan facing a threatening monk; Joan being shaved before the execution; Joan at the foot of the scaffold.

These black and white pictures come from a remarkable silent movie, *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, about the trial and death of Joan of Arc. This film made in 1928 by Carl Dreyer is considered as a masterpiece.



The film is composed primarily of extreme close-ups especially of Joan and her interrogator Bishop Cauchon



Notes

Chronology

- 1412 Born Joan Darc in Domrémy, France
- 1425 First hears voices
- 1428 Commanded by voices to go to the Dauphin [*title of uncrowned Kings of France*]
- May 1428 Fails to gain support from Robert de Baudricourt for her mission to see the Dauphin Charles VII of France
- Oct. 1428 Siege of Orleans by English army begins
- Jan. 1429 Gains support from Robert de Baudricourt
- Feb. 1429 Meets the Dauphin
- March 1429 Gains the approval of examining churchmen at Poitiers
- April 29, 1429 Enters Orleans
- May 4-7, 1429 Battle of Orleans
- May 8, 1429 Siege of Orleans ends - English troops retreat north of the Loire River
- June 11-17 1429 Leads French armies to victory at Jargeau, Meung, Beaugency, and Patay
- July 17, 1429 Coronation of Charles VII of France at Rheims
- Sept. 8, 1429 French forces fail to take Paris—Joan of Arc's influence begins to decline
- Dec. 1429 Joan of Arc ennobled by Charles VII
- May 23, 1430 Joan of Arc captured by Burgundian forces at Compiègne, imprisoned in Beaufort castle
- Nov. 21, 1430 Joan of Arc delivered to the English
- Dec. 23, 1430 Joan of Arc arrives in Rouen
- Feb. 21, 1431 Trial for heresy begins
- May 30, 1431 Burned at the stake
- Dec. 1455 The Process of Rehabilitation of Joan of Arc begins at Rouen
- July 7, 1456 Pope Calixtus III declares 1431 verdict against Joan of Arc null and void
- 1920 Roman Catholic Church admits Joan of Arc to the catalogue of saints

* * *

Europe in the late Middle Age: a time of great confusion and uncertainty.

The fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries were a time of confusion and chaos in the West. Decade after decade everything seemed to go wrong: economic depression, war, rebellion, and plague harried the people, and neither ecclesiastical nor secular governments seemed capable of easing their distress. At times the whole structure of European society seemed to be crumbling, as it had at the end of the Roman Empire. Yet the Europe that emerged from this time of troubles went on to conquer the world. The science and technology, the navies and the armies, the governments and the business organizations that were to give Europe unquestioned supremacy for four centuries—all were taking shape in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The dire stretch of history marked by the Hundred Years' War, the Black Death, and the Great Schism seems an unlikely seedbed for these great accomplishments. We are struck by the decay of the medieval way of life rather than by the almost imperceptible emergence of new ideas and new forms of organization. But we should not forget that the new ideas were there, that the people of western Europe never quite lost faith in their destiny, never quite gave up striving for a more orderly and prosperous society. There was confusion and uncertainty, but not the complete disintegration that had followed the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Economic weakness and political failure

The most obvious cause of the troubles of the last medieval centuries was economic depression. Given the techniques then prevalent, by 1300 Western Europe had about reached the limit of its capacity to produce food and manufactured goods, and, consequently, its ability to increase its trade. There were no more reserves of fertile land to bring into cultivation; in fact, a good deal of the land that was already being cultivated was marginal or submarginal in quality. For many years there was no significant increase in industrial output; production might shift from one center to another, but the total output remained about the same. Population ceased to grow; most towns barely held their own, and some, especially in southern France, declined sharply. The Italian towns fared better; they increased their share of Mediterranean trade and of the production of luxury textiles. But even Italy had economic difficulties during the middle years of the fourteenth century when northern

rulers, like Edward III of England, repudiated the debts they owed Italian bankers. In short, until Europe found new sources of wealth and new markets both governments and individuals were constantly on the verge of bankruptcy.

Economic stagnation created a climate of opinion hostile to innovation and efforts to cooperate for the common welfare. Each individual, each community, each class was eager to preserve the monopolies and privileges that guaranteed it some share of the limited wealth available. It was during these years that the towns and guilds adopted their most restrictive regulations. Ordinary laborers found it difficult to become master workmen; master workmen were discouraged from devising new methods of production. Fortunately the attempt to preserve the status quo was thwarted by the weakness of government and by the ingenuity of enterprising businessmen. Some new techniques were introduced, and some new industries were established. But capital was limited, and it took many years before new techniques or new products had much impact on the economy.

Economic weakness helps explain the weakness of most governments. Rulers were always short of money, for the old taxes brought in less and less revenue and it was very difficult to impose new taxes. Salaries of government officials were insufficient, because of continuing inflation, and were often years in arrears. Most officials supported themselves by taking fees, gifts, and bribes from private citizens; they began to think of their offices as private possessions. Men with this attitude could keep up the routine, which was an important element of stability in a troubled society. But they showed much less zeal in perfecting their administrative techniques than had their thirteenth-century predecessors.

Financial difficulties were not the only cause of weakness in government. The assertion of sovereignty by secular rulers at the end of the thirteenth century had been somewhat premature. They had neither the ability to make realistic plans for the welfare of their people nor the authority to impose such remedies as they did devise. Most secular rulers could think only of increasing their revenues by conquering new lands. Such a policy solved no problems; it merely postponed them for the victor and aggravated them for the vanquished. With governments discredited by futile and costly wars, many men lost faith in their political leaders and turned to rebellion and civil war.

The leaders of revolt, however, showed no more ability than the kings and princes against whom they were rebelling. Many of the leaders were members of the landed nobility who still had wealth and influence even though they had lost their old rights of feudal government. But while they found it easy enough to gain power, they did not know how to exercise the power that they gained. Their main purpose was to preserve their own privileges or to direct government revenues to their own pockets—again, policies that solved no basic problems. Impatient with the routine tasks of administration, the aristocracy usually split into quarreling factions. The upper classes sometimes used parliamentary forms to justify their acts, but this only made representative assemblies appear to be vehicles of factionalism and disorder. When the desire for stronger government finally arose once again, the kings found it easy to abolish or suspend assemblies; only in England did representative assemblies retain any vitality.

Other classes performed no better than the nobles. The bourgeoisie thought in terms of local or, at most, regional interests, and they were inept in running their own municipal governments. The townsmen split into factions—old families against new families, international traders against local merchants, rich against poor—and the faction in power tried to ruin its opponents by unequal taxation or discriminatory economic legislation. The result was that local self-government collapsed in town after town. Venice remained powerful and independent under a merchant oligarchy, as did some of the German trading towns. But more often a tyrant seized power, as in certain towns in Italy, or else the officials of a king or a powerful noble took over control of the towns.

As for the peasants, they were far more restive and unhappy than they had been in the thirteenth century. With no new lands to clear and no new jobs to be had in the towns, they had little hope of improving their lot. Some of them managed to ease the burden of taxes and of payments to landlords by renegotiating their leases or by moving from one estate to another, but for most of them this road to advancement was too tedious and uncertain. The peasants rebelled in country after country, killing landlords, burning records, and demanding that payments for their land be lowered or abolished altogether. These rebellions were hopeless; untrained and poorly armed peasants were no match for an aristocracy with a strong military tradition. But the fact that the peasants did rebel reveals the

despair and the tendency to violence that marked the end of the Middle Ages.

(taken from: *The Mainstream of Civilization*,
by Joseph R. Strayer & Hans W. Gatzke,
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich publishers, 1979, USA)

* * *

France in the later middle ages

The monarchy in France also had its troubles during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The sons of Philip the Fair died in rapid succession, leaving only daughters to succeed them. The barons, afraid that one of their number might gain excessive power by marrying a reigning queen, invented a rule barring women from the succession. In 1328 they placed Philip of Valois, a cousin of the last king and a nephew of Philip the Fair, on the throne. But since Philip owed his position to the barons, he had to spend most of his reign bestowing favors on his supporters and keeping peace among factions of nobles. The widespread loyalty to the king that had marked the late thirteenth century weakened, and the rebellions and acts of treason plagued the country. These internal disorders help to account for the French defeats in the first few decades of the Hundred Years' War.

Philip's son, John (1350-64), had no better fortune. His capture by the English at Poitiers, with the subsequent loss of territory and the heavy taxes needed to raise his ransom, caused widespread dissatisfaction. In 1358 the peasants rose in a revolt that was no more successful than the English rebellion but much more bloody and destructive. In the same year the Estates General, led by the Paris bourgeoisie, tried to take over the government. The attempt failed, both because the Estates had had little experience in government and because their leaders had no support among the great nobles. John's son, Charles V (1364-80), regained much of the lost ground by suppressing his opponents at home and by driving the English from one stronghold after another. If his successor had been a more capable ruler, the French might have escaped another century of troubles.

Unfortunately, most of the brains and determination in the French royal family went to uncles and cousins of the new king

rather than to the king himself. Charles VI (1380-1422) was never strong either in mind or in character, and after 1390 he suffered intermittent spells of insanity. The government was conducted largely by princes of the blood royal who quarreled bitterly among themselves over offices, pensions, and gifts of land. When the Duke of Burgundy was assassinated in 1419 by the followers of the Duke of Orleans, the quarrels turned into a civil war and the new Duke of Burgundy allied himself with the English. Since, in addition to Burgundy, he had acquired Flanders and other provinces of the Low Countries, he was the most powerful prince in France and his defection proved disastrous. It was during this period of civil war that Henry V made his rapid conquests and forced Charles VI to recognize Henry's son as heir to the French throne.

(taken from: *The Mainstream of Civilization*
by Joseph R. Strayer & Hans W. Gatz,
Harcourt Brace Jovanovich publishers, 1979, USA)

In this painting by French artist
Lepneveu, the little peasant
Joan of Arc is shown listening
to divine voices



100 Years' War Brief Chronology

- 1328 Charles IV, King of France, dies, ending the Capetian dynasty. His cousin, Philip of Valois, succeeds him as Philip VI.
- 1337 Philip VI declares English King Edward's fiefs [in France] forfeit and begins harassing the frontiers of Aquitaine [a province of France held by the English king].
- 1338 English King Edward III formally claims the French crown.
- 1346 Battle of Crecy [in France]: disaster for the French.
- 1356 Battle of Poitiers: another big defeat for the French. French King taken prisoner.
- 1360 Peace of Bretigny. France to pay ransom for the King. A big part (2/5th) of the French territory is under English control.
- 1369 Renewed fighting in France.
- 1370 French troops commanded by Bertrand du Guesclin, who wins several battles. England in a precarious position.
- 1392 Charles VI of France suffers his first attack of insanity. Conflict between the Armagnacs and the Burgundians [who will later become allies of the English] begins.
- 1399 Henry of Lancaster seizes English throne, becoming Henry IV.
- 1415 Henry V wins a great victory over the French at Agincourt [in France].
- 1420 Treaty of Troyes: Charles VI of France disinherits his son, gives his daughter in marriage to the son of English King Henry V: their child to be King of France.
- 1429 Joan of Arc relieves the siege at Orleans. She wins several other battles, particularly at Patay. In July 1429, Charles VII of France is crowned in Rheims, the traditional place of the coronation of French Kings.
- 1430 Joan of Arc is taken prisoner at Compiègne. No

ransom is paid for her by King Charles VII. She is then sold to the English who put her to trial before an ecclesiastic tribunal in Rouen.

1431

Joan burned at the stake at Rouen.

1435

Peace of Arras; Burgundy abandons the English.

1436

Charles VII of France captures Paris.

1453

Bordeaux falls to the French. The war ends without a treaty.



The Hundred Years' War: a brief summary of the main events

Edward III shared his barons' fondness for courtly magnificence and chivalric warfare. More popular with the aristocracy than his father had been, he was also more susceptible to their influence. Never quite willing to risk his popularity by forcing a showdown with the barons, he allowed them to retain a strong position in Parliament and in the Council. This is probably why he drifted into the Hundred Years' War with France. War was a policy on which he and his barons could agree, and so long as the war was successful he could avoid domestic controversies.

There were, of course, other reasons for the war. France was still trying to annex the English holdings in Aquitaine and gain full control of Flanders, which was the best market for English wool. France was aiding Scotland, which had regained its independence in the battle of Bannockburn (1314) and was in a state of almost permanent

hostility with England. French and English sailors were intermittently plundering each other's ships. These frictions were enough to cause a war, but they do not quite explain why the war lasted for generations. The king persisted because he gained new and valuable territories; the barons, because they acquired booty and profitable military commands.

After a bad start, caused largely by financial difficulties, Edward came up with an amazing string of victories. He gained control of the Channel in a naval battle at Sluys (1340) and nearly annihilated the French army at Crecy (1346). Then he went on to take Calais, which remained a port of entry for English armies for two centuries. Ten years later, Edward's son, the Black Prince (also named Edward), crushed another French army at Poitiers and took the French king prisoner. In the treaty that followed this victory the French agreed to pay a huge ransom for their king and to cede about two-fifths of their country to the English.

Edward had succeeded because his country was more united than France and gave him more consistent financial support, and also because he had developed new tactics for his army. He mixed companies of archers, armed with the famous English longbow, with companies of dismounted cavalry in heavy armor. A charge, by either mounted or foot soldiers would be thrown into confusion by showers of arrows. The few men who broke through to the main line could be easily dealt with by the troops in heavy armor. The only weakness in Edward's formation was that it was essentially defensive; it could not be used for a charge. Only when portable firearms were invented at the end of the fifteenth century was it possible to use missile weapons for an attack.

Like many other generals, Edward found it easier to win victories than to profit from them. The French, with no intention of fulfilling the terms of the treaty they had signed, launched a war of attrition that gradually exhausted their enemies. England simply did not have enough men or enough resources to garrison territories larger than Edward's whole kingdom. The French learned to avoid headlong rushes at large English armies and concentrated instead on picking off isolated garrisons and small detachments. As a result, the English had lost a large part of their conquests by the time of Edward III's death in 1377.

The Lancastrian kings, who ruled from 1399 to 1461, never quite lived down the violence by which they had come to power. Their title

was faulty—there were other descendants of Edward III with a better claim—and they seldom had the unanimous support of the great lords. Henry IV had difficulty suppressing two serious rebellions, and Henry V (1413-22) tried to unite the country by the dangerous expedient of reviving the Hundred Years' War. He was a brilliant general, as he revealed in his victory at Agincourt (1415); he was the first commander of a European army to use siege artillery on a large scale. By securing the alliance of the Duke of Burgundy, a disgruntled French prince, he was able to force the French king, Charles VI, to accept a treaty in which Charles disinherited his son, married his daughter to Henry, and agreed that any son born of this union was to be king of France. The next year both Charles and Henry died, and a one-year-old baby, Henry VI, became king of England and France.

Henry V, with all his ability, would have found it hard to control two kingdoms; Henry VI never had a chance. His long minority was disastrous. In England his uncles and cousins, supported by baronial factions, quarreled bitterly. In France, the disinherited son of Charles VI claimed the throne as Charles VII and carried on the war from the unconquered country south of the Loire. The English pressed him hard, but just as his cause seemed hopeless he was saved by the appearance of Joan of Arc. To the English, Joan was "a limb of the devil." But she stirred the French to drive the English back



Victorious Joan enters the city of Orleans

from the Loire and to win an important victory at Patay (1429). After these successes it hardly mattered that Joan fell into English hands and was burned as a witch, for the courage and enthusiasm with which she had inspired the French survived her. The Burgundians abandoned the English alliance, and the English position in France deteriorated steadily. Forts and provinces fell one by one, until by 1453 only Calais was left. And so after twelve decades of fighting and plundering, the war at last came to an end.

(taken from: *The Mainstream of Civilization*
by Joseph R. Strayer & Hans W. Gatzke,
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About Mark Twain

Born Samuel Longhorne CLEMENS in a small town of the southern United States in 1835, he is considered to be the first great American writer of the West of the country. He became famous after the publication of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1882), and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885). By then, he was considered among the greatest character writers in the literary community. Twain died on April 21, 1910, having survived his children Langdon, Susan and Jean as well as his wife, Olivia. In his lifetime, he became a distinguished member of the literary profession, honored by Yale, the University of Missouri, and Oxford with literary degrees.

Mark Twain and his book on Joan of Arc

Mark Twain was already internationally renowned as a humorist, satirist, storyteller, and lecturer. He spent twelve years researching the well-documented history of Joan of Arc, whom he described as "the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced." Her story is remarkable for the amount of written historical record that exists dating back to her own century—documents, letters, transcripts from her trial.

Twain wanted to present a fair picture, so he pored over both French and English accounts and records. Even then his lifelong

passion for Joan did not flow easily into his pen. "There are some books that refuse to be written ... because the right form for the story does not present itself." Twain started the book six times before he found the right form—a memoir by an on-the-scene eyewitness, Joan of Arc's own page and secretary, Louis de Conte. History gives us the name Louis de Conte, the real-life page who transcribed Joan of Arc's dictated letters, accompanied her in battle, and was later called to testify at her trial. Mark Twain's fictionalized de Conte spent his whole life with Joan—he grew up in Joan of Arc's village of Domremy as her childhood friend and confidante, accompanied her into battle, and was with her even up to the moment of her death. Mark Twain then added yet another layer to his story—a fictitious "translator" of de Conte's fictional memoirs. Through Louis de Conte we share the intensity of Twain's subjective devotion to Joan of Arc, whose radiance and purity were modeled on Twain's own beloved daughter Susy. Through the scholarly interjections of the translator, Jean Francois Alden, we confront Mark Twain's impressive research—and more objective scholarly tone.

Twain chose to veil his identity under two pseudonyms because he wanted this book to be accepted as a serious work. "People ... are disappointed if they don't find a joke in [what I write]. This book means more to me than anything I have ever undertaken." The story was first serialized in Harper's Magazine without Mark Twain's byline. But Mark Twain's public was not so easily fooled. A year later, when *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* was published in book form, Twain came forward and dedicated the book to his beloved wife, Olivia.

The book, which is divided into three sections, took two years to write. Twain started it while living in a villa in Florence, Italy, but when serious financial difficulties intervened, he had to put aside his pet project for a time. He picked up his pen again in France, and wrote the concluding section. "I have never done any work before that cost so much thinking and weighing and measuring and planning and cramming.... The first two-thirds of the book were easy; for I only needed to keep my historical road straight... and [I] shovelled in as much fancy-work and invention on both sides of the historical road as I pleased. But on this last third I have constantly used five French sources and five English ones, and I think no telling historical nugget in any of them has escaped me," he wrote to a friend.

Every night Twain would read his newest chapters to his wife and daughters. "Wait—wait till I get a handkerchief," Susy often demanded, and as Twain read the final chapter to his family, not a single eye was dry.



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This monograph studies the extraordinary life of a young girl named Joan of Arc, born to a peasant family in 15th century's France. As a child Joan was given by divine voices a precise task. That task was nothing else than to leave her village and meet the heir to the French throne; to obtain from him the commandment of the French armies; and, at their head, to defeat the English invaders. Moreover she had to make sure that the weak king of France acquire legitimacy by being properly crowned. A stupendous mission indeed — which this girl fulfilled up to the last detail. Thus Joan's story is the story of divine intervention on earth. How else can one explain what happened? Nobody can explain how a young peasant-girl who had hardly moved from her village knew how to place artillery most effectively, to give but one example. It can only be that she was a transparent instrument able to receive without distortion a knowledge coming from somewhere far beyond her normal consciousness. She was also able to make accurate prophecies, and this was duly recorded in official documents. In her sublime purity, she was totally devoted to the cause of God and prepared for any sacrifice, so that His will may be accomplished. The whole story does not make sense unless it is indeed a play of the Spirit. Truly, in Joan's story one can see what is rarely to be seen with such clarity, the mark of divine footprints in human events. It is as if a gigantic current of force, coming from unfathomable depths or heights, suddenly appeared at the surface of human affairs. If one were to ask for a proof of the existence of the Divinity, the story of Joan of Arc could be seen as being as close as it could be of a compelling proof of a Something beyond.

