THE
MAID OF ORLEANS

Translated from the German of
Frederick Henning

BY

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Table of Contents

List of Figures

Preface

The life story of Joan of Arc, as told in this volume, closely follows the historical facts as well as the official records bearing upon her trial and burning for "heresy, relapse, apostasy, and idolatry." It naturally divides into two parts. First, the simple pastoral life of the shepherd maiden of Domremy, which is charmingly portrayed; the visions of her favorite saints; the heavenly voices which commissioned her to raise the English siege of Orleans and crown the Dauphin; her touching farewell to her home; and, secondly, the part she played as the Maid of Orleans in the stirring events of the field; the victories which she achieved over the English and their Burgundian allies; the raising of the siege; the coronation of the ungrateful Dauphin at Rheims; her fatal mistake in remaining in his service after her mission was accomplished; her capture at Compiègne; her infamous sale to the English by Burgundy; her more infamous trial by the corrupt and execrable Cauchon; and her cruel martyrdom at

the stake. Another story, the abduction of Marie of Chafleur, her rescue by Jean Renault, and their final happiness, is closely interwoven with the movement of the main story, and serves to lighten up the closing chapters. This episode is pure romance of an exciting nature; but the life of the Maid of Orleans is a remarkably faithful historical picture, which is all the more vivid because the characters are real. In this respect it resembles nearly all the volumes in the numerous German "libraries for youth." They are stories of real lives, concisely, charmingly, and honestly told, and adhere so closely to fact that the reader forms something like an intimate personal acquaintance with the characters they introduce.

G. P. U.

I — The Fairy Tree

As the traveller, descending the valley from Neufchâteau, approaches the village of Domremy,* he will observe at his right upon an eminence of the nearest range of hills a stately chestnut-tree, its lower branches hung with wreaths of flowers, some fresh, some fading. If he does not mind a little fatigue and climbs to this spot, he will be richly rewarded for his exertions. The tree in itself is a sufficient compensation for his efforts, for who does not contemplate with admiration such a work of nature? Who does not listen with rapture to the gentle rustle of its leaves and find rest in its cool shade? But this tree has a still stronger attraction for those who believe its story. Ofttimes in the twilight they see happy sprites dancing round it with joyous faces, and the soft

*Neufchâteau and Domremy are both in the department of Vosges, France. The former is a town with about 4000 population; the latter, a village, famous as the birthplace of Joan of Arc.

rustling of its leaves they declare is celestial whispers, for it is given to them to understand heavenly speech.
This tree is the "Fairy Tree."*

The outlook from this spot will still further repay the traveller. A beautiful valley spreads out before him, bounded on either side by the forest-crowned heights of Argonne and Ardennes, between which the Meuse† winds its silvery way. Numerous villages dot these heights and are sprinkled here and there along the lower pasture-land. North and south gleam the towers of Neufchâteau and Vaucouleurs.‡ The nearest, and at the same time most pleasant of these villages, is Domremy, whose cottages, embowered in greenery, cluster about the little church of Saint Margaret. Many herds of cattle and sheep are feeding in the pastures between fields luxuriant with growing crops. Looking back, the eye catches the dusky

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*One of the witnesses at the trial of Joan of Arc said: "There is a tree called by us the 'Fairy Tree.' Every year the young girls and youths of Domremy come to walk there on the Lætare Sunday. Jeanne the Maid went there like all the other girls, and did as they did. Though she hung garlands on the boughs of the 'Fairy Tree,' she liked better to take them into the parish church and lay them on the altars of Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine."

†The river Meuse flows through France, Belgium, and the Netherlands, a distance of 500 miles, and empties into the North Sea.

‡Vaucouleurs is a town of about 3000 population. It was from there Joan of Arc started on her expedition to save France.

summits of the Bois de Chêne,* and at the crossroad leading thither stands the chapel of Saint Catherine.

Between the chapel and the Fairy Tree, and somewhat nearer the latter, sparkles a bubbling spring whose curative powers were believed in by those of pious faith in the olden times.

Thus the scene appears under pleasant skies. But when the temperature suddenly changes, and the cold air rushes down into the valley, its mists are driven and scattered among the mountainous defiles. At such times superstitious villagers believe they see the fairies dancing round the tree, and even the saints of heaven in the wavering shapes of the mist.

Among the mysterious spots which have invested the neighborhood of Domremy with such fame and sacredness Bois de Chêne is not the least famous. One cannot enter its dark recesses without that peculiar feeling of awe which inspires a solitary wanderer in the presence of nature's grandeurs, —a feeling which inevitably fills the mind of a superstitious person with a bewildering array of supernatural fancies. It was from this very forest that Merlin the wizard predicted the deliverer of France would come.

Think of a child of susceptible and fanciful nature, fed upon nursery tales full of superstitions, a child passionately fond of solitary reveries and fervent appeals to the saints, growing

*Bois de Chêne, or Wood of Oaks, is the name of the forest upon the edge of which is Domremy, Joan of Arc's native village.

up in such an environment! Is it remarkable that such a child should see marvels on the earth and in the air, and the saints themselves in bodily image, and that she should hear their voices and listen devoutly to angelic music in the celestial regions?

Just such a child as this sat under the Fairy Tree on a beautiful spring morning in the year 1424.* She was a maiden of twelve years, and was tending a little flock of sheep grazing on the hillside. Even the casual observer would have noticed her striking appearance, for while the other girls were frolicking in the meadow below her, she sat leaning against the tree, gazing fixedly into space, and evidently thinking of other things than dance, and sport, and herds. Looking more closely into her lovely oval face and observing its transparent tints and delicate features, the question would at once suggest itself—How did such a slight, ethereal creature happen among the children of peasants? Those wonderful eyes did not merely reveal the self-unconsciousness of the visionary and the rapture of supernatural contemplation. They were clear mirrors of the heart, reflecting its inmost recesses and depths. That heart was the heart of an angel, the heart of a child so innocent it was impossible not to love her and sympathize with her.

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*Joan of Arc (Jeanne d'Arc or Darc) was born at Domremy, Jan. 6, 1412, and died May 30, 1431. Her father was Jacques d'Arc, and her mother Isabelle Romée, illiterate laborers, but of good repute. She had three brothers,—Jacques, Pierre, and Jean,—and a sister Catharine.

As she sat there, a flock of little birds flew to the tree, filling the air with the music of their songs. Apparently she did not notice them, for she neither moved nor changed the expression of her face. They fluttered down from the tree and hopped about the dreamer, approaching her more and more nearly, until at last some of them lit on her head and shoulder. Now for the first time she was conscious of her little guests.

"Ah!" she exclaimed in a soft melodious voice. "You are here and I did not know it." She quickly opened a little basket standing near her, sprinkled some crumbs upon the ground, and watched with childish delight the liveliness of her tiny companions. Her pleasure, however, was soon marred by a saucy and envious fellow in the little crowd, who pecked his neighbor. Chirping sorrowfully, the victim flew to the maiden's feet.

"Alas! alas! poor little bird!" she exclaimed, the tears coming into her eyes. She took the little fellow in her lap and caressed him. "Wait, now, thou envious 'wolf,'" she said, addressing the offender. "Did I not scatter crumbs enough for you all? And did you not know I would have doubled the amount if that had not been sufficient? You deserve to be punished for your greediness. Now you shall see how finely this poor little fellow will fare at his own table." Thereupon she filled her lap from the basket, and the little one ate with a relish, while the "wolf" was not allowed to come near the table, much as he wished to. Suddenly the flock rose and flew into the branches of the

tree in manifest alarm. Her sheep, which had been feeding below her, rushed up the hill as fast as they could, and closely huddled together.

"What is the matter?" cried the maiden, as she cast a hasty glance at the flying herd. "What has driven you away from the meadow in such fright? Holy Catherine! the cruel wolf must be lurking on the edge of the wood."

She quickly sprang up, seized her crook, and flew to the Bois de Chêne, where a wolf was really lying in wait. One who had seen her then would hardly have recognized the gentle maiden, the dreamer of a moment before, in this resolute heroine, her eyes flashing with courage. Wonderful to relate, the beast fled from her. For an instant it crouched, ready to spring upon her, and then slunk away into the forest. Thereupon the little heroine went to the neighboring chapel, knelt before the image of Saint Catherine, and poured out the thankfulness of her heart in long and fervent prayers. It was her childish belief that her patron saint had performed a miracle. She did not know that the beasts of the wood can be intimidated by the firmness and courage of a fearless person's glance, and that even the lion himself will not attack such a person unless he is in a frenzy of rage.

As the little one left the chapel the spiritual illumination which irradiated her face when she sat dreaming under the Fairy Tree again shone in her beautiful eyes. Her route led her

to the miraculous spring.* The fresh green of the bushes and turf allured her. She threw herself down, and soon was lulled by the gentle plashing of the water into sweet fancies. For a long time she failed to observe that she had companions who had come there to drink,—a doe and fawns, who fearlessly approached and drank the clear water undisturbed. After they had quenched their thirst, the fawns stood watching the dreamer with their intelligent little eyes as if they were awaiting friendly recognition from an old acquaintance. Not receiving it, they sported frolicsomely around her. Suddenly the charming scene was interrupted. The animals tossed up their heads, listened intently, and then, as if at a word of command, galloped away to the forest. A bevy of simple, joyous, sun-browned shepherdesses came running toward her from the meadow.

"Joan, Joan," cried one, "where are you?"

The maiden rose.

"Aha!" said the one just speaking, "she has been listening again to the murmurs of the spring. Just see how wondrously her eyes glisten!"

At this all of them came up and gazed with a kind of awe at the strange maiden.

"Well, what do you wish?" said Joan, gently.

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*This spring, in the depositions of the witnesses at Joan's trial, is always called the "Well of the Thorn."

"We have made a wager," replied the former speaker. "See this beautiful wreath, Joan. After we had woven it we decided it should go to the winner in a race to the Fairy Tree. Agnes boasted it would be hers. Margot was just as sure that she would win it. 'Ah!' said I; 'if Joan were only here you would not talk this way!' 'And why not?' said Agnes. 'Because,' said I, 'Saint Catherine always helps her.' 'Oh,' interposed Margot, 'I will find Joan and she also shall race.' Then I said, 'We will all search for Joan.' 'Yes,' all shouted, 'let us find Joan!' And here we are. Here is the wreath, and there is the Fairy Tree. Will you run?"

Joan made no reply. She stood absorbed in devotion, and prayed: "Holy Catherine, give me the victory, not for my sake, but for thy honor."

"Joan, do you not hear us?"

"Yes, I am ready."

Gleefully the maidens formed a line. "One, two, three," a clear voice counted, and all ran up the hillside. In a few seconds the line was zig-zag, with Agnes, Margot, and Joan in the lead. Most of the others gave up the race and followed slowly on, watching the three in eager suspense. Soon, however, they noticed there was one in the lead, for the other two had perceptibly fallen back.

"Did I not tell you Joan would win?" said the one who had first spoken.

“But there is some witchcraft about it,” said her neighbor. “Look at her, look! Holy Margaret! Her feet do not touch the ground.”

“That is so,” all said, as they crossed themselves. “She is flying through the air.”

It really seemed as if Joan were flying. The mist, the fast-gathering twilight, and the distance created such an ocular illusion that any superstitious spectator would have sworn she was flying. All hurried to the tree, under whose branches the victor was not standing, but devoutly kneeling. The joyous crowd surrounded her, and no feeling of envy clouded their joy as they placed the wreath upon her fair head. As the night was now fast coming on, the girls went homewards with the flocks. They were all from the village of Domremy.

Joan found Jacques, her father, Pierre, her brother, and Duram Laxart, her uncle, engaged in earnest conversation with a stranger in the square in front of the church. A few words which she overheard aroused her curiosity, and she approached the group and listened.

“I bid you repent,” said the stranger, “lest the wrath of Heaven be visited upon you, for all the misfortunes of this land are divine punishments for the sins of the Court and the King’s kindred.”

“Oh, oh, holy father,” said one, “that would be very sad.”

“What do you mean by that, my son?”

"I mean it would be very sad for Heaven to punish poor people who have done no wrong, for the wrongdoings of the Court."

"Go home, thou son of Belial who doubtest that which the Spirit reveals to thee through my lips. Shut thyself up in thy chamber, and three times repeat seven paternosters, that thy soul may be released from the bonds of doubt, for doubt is the work of the devil, who is already stretching out his claws to seize thee."

"But, holy father—"

"Be quiet, Gamoche," interposed another villager. "Do not interrupt the holy father. He will explain it all to us."

"Yes, yes," cried the others, "he will explain everything."

"Well, then, listen to me, children," resumed the stranger. "But, holy Mother of God, where shall I begin? The list of the sins of this Court is so long that if I should go back a century, even then it would not be the beginning. I will confine myself to the recent ones, which must be more or less familiar to you all. Have you heard about the last King, Charles the Sixth?"*

"Why should we not have heard? He died insane only two years ago."

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*Charles the Sixth was born at Paris in 1368, and died in 1422. He reigned forty-two years, but became deranged in 1392, and the Duke of Orleans, his brother, gained the ascendancy. It was his Queen, Isabella, who prepared the way for the treaty of Troyes, which was to make Henry the Fifth of England King of France on Charles's death.

"Yes, insane. He had a few lucid moments after 1392, in which he recognized in some measure the profligacy of the administration. The whole royal family, with but few exceptions, acted as if they were insane. First of all, there was the Queen, the notorious Isabella of Bavaria, who was as much a stranger to the nobility of human nature as she was to the divine. Her every purpose and act had no higher motive than the gratification of her own desires and the discovery how to accomplish them. It would have mattered nothing to her if a sea of blood had been shed, if only her interests were advanced. There was the Duke Louis of Orleans,* brother of the insane King, who pandered to Isabella's profligacy and lust of power, finally seized the reins of sovereignty, and plunged the state into direst confusion. There were the King's uncles, the dukes of Bourbon, Berry, Burgundy, and Anjou, all alike avaricious and ambitious for power, who lashed the Duke of Orleans and the King with the scourge of war, murdered their subjects, and ravaged the country. Then came numerous factions which contended with one another, one for this, and one for that, and finally almost countless great and little lords, robber barons, who, pretending to espouse the cause of one party, harried the districts of others, leaving a trail of pillage and blood. To complete the burden of wretchedness,

*After the derangement of his brother, Louis assumed the regency in opposition to the Duke of Burgundy. He was assassinated by the latter in 1407.

King Henry the Fifth sent his Englishmen, those hereditary enemies of France, across the Channel. In alliance with the turbulent dukes, particularly those of Burgundy and Brittany, they advanced victorious, captured one place after another, and at last even Rouen and Paris, so that few provinces were left to the unfortunate King. Frightful confusion followed when this King died in 1422. Henry the Fifth, to be sure, died in the same year, but his field marshal, the Duke of Bedford, guardian of young Henry the Sixth,* did not abandon the field. The infamous treaty of Troyes gave him the semblance of right."

"How so, holy father?" interposed one of the villagers.

"Be quiet," replied another. "You ought to have known that Queen Isabella, out of hate and revenge against her youngest son Charles, who, after the death of his brother the Dauphin, was crown prince, concluded that treaty with England whereby the French royal family was barred from the succession and the King of England was declared successor of Charles the Sixth."

"Oh, the disgrace! Oh, the shame!" several exclaimed.

"And this poor Dauphin," continued the former speak-er, "spent a joyless youth, in which his unnatural mother often forced him as well as his father to suffer the pangs of hunger; and yet, poor, weak, and throneless as he is, he is still ready

*Henry the Sixth was crowned King of France in 1430, but lost all his French possessions except Calais, owing to the successes of Joan of Arc. The Duke of Bedford was his uncle.

to struggle for that throne which is his birthright as Charles the Seventh. Is this not so, holy father?"

"Certainly, certainly, God's pity," replied the stranger. "He should rule by his own and by divine right. The treaty of Troyes cannot prevent it. But where is the hero who will lead him to coronation at Rheims? Alas, only miraculous interposition can save him from ruin."

"Saint Catherine," sighed a gentle voice.

"Joan!" exclaimed Jacques, as he recognized his daughter, "what are you doing here? Go home."

"Not yet, father Jacques," said the stranger. "Let her stay. Do you not know that the prayers from a pure child's heart are heard by the dear saints? And," he added, "I have never seen eyes so full of innocence and piety as hers."

"Ah!" replied Jacques, "of what use are the prayers of a child when the whole country lies helpless?"

"Are you also an unbeliever?" replied the stranger. "Know you not that the great God can manifest Himself in a little child?"

These were the last words of the conversation which Joan heard. She suddenly disappeared, but she did not go home. She wended her way to the church, which was always open. Never had her heart been so troubled and full of strange longings, never had she been so powerfully moved to hold communion with her saint. It was not so much the desire to make a votive offering of her wreath as it was the unspeakable sorrow of the fatherland and the wretched plight of the poor

Dauphin that urged her to this sacred spot. And was this strange? If her sympathetic nature made her shed tears over the slight suffering of a bird, how much more would it force her to weep over the story of universal misfortune which she had just heard! Why should not the courage with which she had defended her sheep from the wolf display itself now even more decidedly? And why should she not believe in her very soul that her favorite saint would perform a miracle of rescue?

"Oh, were I only a man!" she sighed from the depth of her heart. "Oh that I could clothe my limbs in armor and wield the sword for the right! I would ask for nothing better in life. No sacrifice would be too great to accomplish it. Then, surely, the beloved saints would not refuse to help me."

In such a spirit she entered the sacred house. It was empty. The shadows of evening, mingling with the clouds of incense smoke which still lingered in the church, were intensified by the feeble light of a small lamp. She thrilled with sacred awe as she advanced through the mysterious gloom. In her exalted mood it seemed to her that Saint Catherine smiled, as with trembling hand she placed the wreath upon her altar. In transports of sorrow and gratitude, of divine trust, and of overwhelming desire for action, she knelt at the altar, and her soul ascended to the celestial abodes. She knew no prayers except the Lord's Prayer, the Credo, and the Ave Maria, but the more she repeated them the more completely was she spiritually absorbed.

“Oh, were I only a man!” she sighed.

Thus little by little she sank into that species of ecstasy in which the ordinary spiritual functions are suspended and there remain only the sacred feeling of heavenly contemplation and the free play of the fancy. It is a condition which differs from actual dreaming only in its danger, for there is danger that this ecstatic feeling once aroused may become real, and its possessor may behold illusive pictures of the fancy. The enthusiast may believe he sees real objects and hears actual voices. He may believe them to be messages from heaven, never asking himself whether such fancies will stand the test of reason. Because of ecstasies like these, deeds have been committed which have darkened the page of history with everlasting shame. But when these ecstasies arise from exalted moral ideas they may achieve results which are far beyond mere human strength and secure imperishable fame for the enthusiast.

Thus it was with this simple child praying at the altar. In her ecstatic fancy she saw the roof of the church open, and her favorite Saints Catherine and Margaret floating down through the clouds of incense. She heard them saying, “Keep thy heart unsullied, Joan, for Heaven has chosen thee as the champion of France.”

The vision disappeared. The dream was over. But in that instant the career of this child was determined. She was the subsequent Maid of Orleans.

II — The Dauphin and La Hire

By the storm of an April day in the year 1428, four years after the events related in the preceding chapter, a man was detained at home in the castle of Chinon.* His costume showed that he was of the highest rank, and the apartment also was furnished in a style of princely luxury. As it was apparent, however, that these luxurious surroundings were the survivals of an older period, evidently the present occupant of the castle either did not care to improve them or could not afford to do it. As a matter of fact the shabbiness of his own costume favored the latter inference. The morose expression of his face, which had but little that was attractive in it, deepened this impression. Nothing about it indicated any higher ambition than the gratification of his physical desires. His appearance gave the impression that he was at least thirty-five years of

*Chinon, a town in the department of Indre-et-Loire, France, was a royal residence from the twelfth century to the reign of Henry the Fourth. In its great hall Charles the Seventh first saw Joan of Arc.

age, but in reality he was only twenty-six. This man was the Dauphin of France, afterwards King Charles the Seventh.

Before him stood a young and beautiful woman, whose face was in striking contrast with his. A dignified royal presence, eyes flashing with spirit and resolution, womanly gentleness and kindness,—such were the characteristics portrayed in her beautiful countenance. Some of its lines indicated troubles of the heart, but her present trouble was of another kind.

This lady was Marie of Anjou, the proud consort of the Dauphin. They were both standing, for in the excitement of their conversation they had evidently risen from their seats.

"Oh, this wretchedness!" she moaned. "Beautiful France desolate! The luxurious fields of the Loire laid waste! The poor people killed or fugitives in the forests! Townsmen in servitude or in continual fear of a victorious enemy! And you! What are you doing?"

"How, I? Who laments all this more than I? Who has to suffer from it more than I? Am I not growing poorer every day because of it? I am afraid I shall not have even an ordinary dinner to-day."

He hastily rang a silver bell, and a servant entered. "Jacques, go to the cook and ask him what he has for dinner."

Contempt and deep sorrow were pictured on Marie's face, but she quickly mastered her anger. "Certainly, my husband, you have to suffer," said she, "but what kind of a king would he be who did not feel the sufferings of his people a thousand-fold?"

"Pah! I feel my poverty above everything else."

"But what necessity is there for your poverty? Do you not know that your poverty will disappear on the day when you overcome the enemy?"

"I overcome the enemy! God help me! I need what few mercenaries I have to forage for the kitchen. Raise fresh troops! How can I do it? What little gold there is in my treasury is already pledged. I overcome the enemy! Ha, ha, ha! they already hold nearly all of France. La Hire* told me to-day that Count Salisbury is before Orleans, and is besieging the city. When Orleans falls, I must fly from here. Then what? I shall end by being a beggar."

"You will not if you pluck up courage and remember that when the necessity is the greatest, divine aid is nearest, and that it is more glorious and more worthy of a king to be vanquished in battle than to be ruined by inglorious indolence."

"Pah! I will do neither the one nor the other. I will live and enjoy myself. That will compensate me for what I lacked in the hungry days of my youth. I will make terms with the English. They may have everything else if they will only leave me Languedoc.† I can live there in a manner that suits my income."

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*La Hire, one of Charles the Seventh's most distinguished generals, was born about 1390, and died at Montauban in 1443.

†One of the ancient governments in Southern France. Toulouse was its capital.

"Shame! shame! what is this I hear?" exclaimed Marie. "Are you a Valois? Does royal blood flow in your veins? Do you not blush to utter such words? Oh, my husband, do whatever else you wish, but save France and me from such shame."

"Well, well, all is not over yet at Orleans."

"But even if it fall, and if all seem lost, even then do not make such a shameful agreement."

With these words the noble lady retired. The moral indignation of her manner and her words appeared to make some impression upon the Dauphin. He buried his face in his hands, and was absorbed in thought—as far as he was capable of thinking.

While thus engaged, an arras door opened behind him, revealing the charming little curly head of a girl of eighteen or nineteen years. No one could have seen that exquisite figure moving along with such easy and consummate grace without confessing he had never before seen such exquisite beauty and fascinating manner. Her charm appeared not only in her beautiful figure, but also in the gracious expression which characterized her personality and radiated from her countenance.

This maiden was the famous Agnes Sorel,* the favorite of Charles the Seventh, who, as history relates, was conspicuous

*Agnes Sorel was born in Touraine about 1409, and died in 1450.

for her womanly tenderness, and who always used her influence over the King for noble purposes and never for personal ends.

The Dauphin was not aware of her presence until he felt the light touch of her hand upon his shoulder. The sight of her was magical in its effect. His face lightened up, and all traces of dejection disappeared.

"Is it you, Agnes? Now everything is all right."

"What has been wrong?" she asked most tenderly.

"Marie has been here. She has made my head ache and has nearly ruined my appetite. But—"

"I know all about it," interrupted Agnes.

"How? You know all about it? Who could have told you?"

"No one told me."

"Oh, you have been eavesdropping. Ah, ha!"

"I had to. I could not go back, and of course I was not permitted to enter."

"Hm! Never mind. It is all right, just the same."

"Oh, no, Your Majesty."

"How? What do you mean?"

"I share the anxiety and trouble of your proud consort."

"Nonsense! You ought not to be troubled."

"By all the saints, Your Majesty, I shall be inconsolable and unhappy if you do not abandon your decision. I should be ashamed to serve a prince who can so easily renounce his rights and his dignities."

"Well, well, I will consider the matter. Will that satisfy you?"

“Oh, no, sire. You must promise me that you will not think again of that hateful scheme. Will you not for my sake?” Thereupon she triumphantly and gracefully pirouetted about the apartment.

“Agnes, I take back my word,” cried the Dauphin.

This made her all the happier, and she continued her dance, singing this accompaniment:—

“Eio, eio, eio, no, He cannot be a King Who does not keep his word! Eio, eio, eio, O, This one here—he is not such, No, no, no, oh, no.”

With the last word she suddenly disappeared, for the heavy tramp of men’s feet was heard in the antechamber. The interruption displeased the Dauphin, and he was about to leave the room, but before he could do so the new-comers stood at the door. It only increased his displeasure that he was forced to remain. The two men, whom he regarded with a sinister expression, were rough and sturdy, men of the class who stand fast in battle and look death fearlessly in the eye, knights in the truest sense of the word.

“So quickly back, my brave La Hire?” said Charles to one of them.

“By Our Lady, Your Majesty, never was there greater need for quick and decisive action than now,” was his reply. “I have just heard that Count Salisbury has completely invested the city of Orleans. Not even a cat can get out of it, and in a few

weeks it will be in the clutches of famine. If we do not help them you can easily see—"

"Help them!" interrupted the Dauphin, despondently. "My good knight, how much money do you suppose there is in my treasury? Ha! ha!"

"The people will see to it that the treasury of their legitimate King is filled if in turn they have the assurance that he will make a stand for the right, for his honor, and for the fatherland."

"And until then I suppose I can keep on with my fasting cure to which my mother accustomed me. You will not believe it, my good La Hire, but it is the sad truth that my cook has notified me he has nothing to serve to-day but a pair of fowls and a hind-quarter of mutton. And you are to be invited as guests to such a banquet as that!"

"Well, sire, that is all right. To-day we will eat the fowls and the mutton; to-morrow we will drive the English out of their kitchens, and seat ourselves at their tables."

"But how are we going to drive them out? It is impossible. Can I summon troops out of the ground?"

"Yes, sire, you can!"

The Dauphin looked at him with astonishment.

"Do you take me for a wizard? Or, do you mean I am in partnership with the devil?"

"Resolution and courage, sire, have often worked wonders. Inscribe them on your banner to-day, and to-morrow it will not

flutter deserted. It will rally those around it who have fallen away discouraged as well as those who follow the profession of arms, and would gladly enlist under such a royal banner for the sake of the rich reward. There are men yet who are ready to stand by you with their good swords. See, here is my stanch friend Saintrailles," pointing to his companion, "and he is not the only one who is ready."

"You are welcome, brave knight," said Charles. "It is a shame I can only invite you to sit down to two fowls and a leg of mutton."

"Sire," replied Saintrailles, who could hardly restrain his indignation, "I was not thinking of your table when I followed my friend here. I was thinking of your wretched plight and of the bleeding fatherland."

"And do you believe it can be helped?"

"Certainly, sire, but he who would win must venture."

"Yes, and in the meantime he may also lose. But, by my faith, I have not much more to lose."

"But all the more to win. The brave soul thinks only of winning."

"Oh, yes, you talk like La Hire, and La Hire talks like Marie, and Marie talks like—but if the English would let me have Languedoc as an independent dukedom, then—"

He did not finish the sentence, for through the side-door, which was partly open, he saw the warning finger of Agnes Sorel. Then he resumed:

“I am glad you have come, noble knights. We will meet at table and further consider this matter. But, alas! two fowls and a leg of mutton!”

On the evening of the same day, when La Hire reached his lodgings and was laying off his armor, a young man of about eighteen years entered. His strong, supple frame, handsome, noble face, piercing black eyes, lofty forehead beneath raven-black hair, as well as his resolute, self-confident bearing, impressed themselves upon the knight.

“Who are you, and what do you wish?” he said, at the same time regarding the young man with evident satisfaction.

“My name, noble knight, is probably unknown to you,” was his reply. “My father of blessed memory, however, left it to me unstained. I have come to honor that name under your banner in the service of the distressed King and the unhappy fatherland.”

“Well said, young man, and, by Our Lady, you look to me like one who can use his sword as well as his tongue. We will consider the matter.”

“Will you not accept my service, noble sir?”

“Gently, young man. Do you suppose that I confide the honor of my banner to every nameless fellow? Out with your name.”

“I am called Jean Renault.”

“Renault? Was your father that Thomas Renault who fell in the service of the Duke of Orleans, fighting against the English?”

"The same, noble sir."

"Then a thousand times welcome. Your father was a brave knight and a noble gentleman. From to-day you shall serve under my banner, and you will have ample opportunities to earn your knightly spurs." Thereupon he shook the young man's hand heartily.

"I thank you for your confidence, noble sir," replied the new adherent, with beaming eyes. "I will do my utmost to justify this confidence, but what I can do to earn my knightly spurs I do not yet know, partly because of my youth, and also, though it is no disgrace, partly because of my poverty."

"Poverty! Your father had property."

"Yes; but it was at Rouen, and it has fallen into the hands of the English."

"Well, we will see that it is returned to you. But now tell me where you acquired your training."

"Under my father, to whose retinue I was last attached."

"Then you have also fought against the English?"

"Yes, I was in the battle in which my father fell and the Duke of Orleans was captured."

"Then you are doubly welcome, my young friend," warmly exclaimed the knight. "I well know I cannot take your father's place, but I will do for you all that a man can."

Overcome by such generosity, Jean pressed the knight's proffered hand to his lips. His heart was too full for words. La Hire understood his silence, and admired him all the more.

“You are from the neighborhood of Rouen, and are acquainted there?” he resumed.

“I know every village thereabouts, noble sir. Alas! they are nearly all ruined.”

“Yes! God and the saints pity them. But, further, do you know the Bishop of Beauvais?”

“Certainly I know him. It is his diocese.”

“That is fortunate. I have a message for the bishop, but no messenger who is acquainted with that region, or cunning enough to evade the English. I can trust you for both?”

“I am ready, noble sir, provided you do not wish me to act as a spy.”

“Do you suppose, my young friend, that I would choose you if I needed a spy? No, the mission you are to undertake has nothing to do with the war. However, I cannot conceal from you the danger involved in the undertaking. The Bishop of Beauvais has the reputation of loving money and leaning to both sides. Do you understand me?”

“Perfectly, noble sir. He is devoted, now to the Burgundians, now to the Lotharingians, now to the English, and now to the Duke of Orleans.”

“Listen. The English might easily regard a messenger to him as a spy, which, by Our Lady, would grieve me. But then again, even if they should hold you as a prisoner it would be uncomfortable, for money is so scarce in our treasury that you might have to wait a long time for your release.”

"I do not think, noble sir, that the English will catch me."

"Then you will undertake the mission?"

"I await your commands."

"Rest to-day and to-morrow. The day after to-morrow you shall have the letter for the Bishop."

As the road to Rouen led directly through the English district it was practically impossible for a messenger to make the journey on horseback. Jean therefore decided to go on foot, disguised as a peasant. As the cities around Orleans were in possession of the English, he was continually forced to take divergent routes. He made a wide circuit around Paris, and at last approached Rouen from the east. While on this part of his journey he stopped in a forest one noon to rest and enjoy his simple meal. While thus engaged, he suddenly heard a female voice crying for help. He sprang up, and ran to the road whence the cry had come. Concealing himself behind some bushes, he watched and listened. He heard the distant rattle of a carriage and the clatter of armor toward the east. A heavy travelling carriage soon came lumbering along the rough road, accompanied by half a dozen men at arms.

"Has a shameful crime been committed, and did the cry come from that carriage?" said Jean to himself. "What! I think I know the arms on the carriage door. Why, certainly. They are the Duke of Luxemburg's. But I must be sure of it." With this he rushed from his hiding-place. "Halt!" he shouted, brandishing his knobbed stick.

The coachman and attendants were astonished. It seemed incredible that a single man, armed with such a weapon, should dare to order them to halt. While they prepared for resistance they watched, not so much the young man as the thickets, for they were suspicious that other peasants might make their appearance. During this brief waiting Jean discovered what he had feared, and what he was so anxious to ascertain. Scarcely had his "halt" died away when a girl's face appeared at the carriage door.

"Help! help!" she cried, in terror. "Help! They are dragging me to a convent—"

A smothered exclamation of pain followed the last word. Some one inside the carriage had pulled her back and stifled her cries. Instead of the girl's face there now appeared at the door the wrathful face of a knight.

"Seize the dog," he shouted. "Do not kill him. I must have him alive."

The men at arms prepared for action at once, but Jean did not stir. He stood immovable as a statue, staring at the door. The distress which he was powerless to relieve threatened his own undoing, but he remained as if glued to the spot, trying to identify the personality of the victim. He had only caught a fleeting glance of her, but that glance left an impression that could not be effaced. She was a girl of fifteen or sixteen years, and so radiantly beautiful that even her expression of poignant suffering and fear could not diminish her charm.

Meanwhile the men at arms were arranging their plan. They evidently intended to surround and overpower him, but their movements were too slow to suit the knight in the carriage. "Well," he roared, "what are you waiting for? Seize him!"

The command brought Jean to his senses, and the first glance revealed his danger. With a quick rush he broke through the circle of his assailants and ran back into the thicket.

"Follow him, ride him down," furiously cried the knight.

The men at arms rode after him, but before they could overtake him he had disappeared in the woods, where they could not follow him on horseback. To dismount and pursue him on foot would have been a rash undertaking, so they turned about only to receive violent reproaches and curses from their master, who was forced to resume his journey without his wished-for victim.

Jean did not go far, for he well knew they would not dare to follow him into the forest. Leaning against a tree, he watched the carriage, which took the road to Rouen. His first impulse was to follow it and keep it in sight, but, upon second thought, he remembered he was not at that moment his own master, but was in the service of another, and that under such circumstances he had no right to risk his liberty or his life. Accordingly he let the carriage go on several hours before he resumed his journey.

Making allowance for the precautions he must take, it would be three or four days before he could reach Rouen. On the

way he made several inquiries as to the whereabouts of the carriage, so that when he entered that city on the evening of the fourth day, he knew it was there. At the inn where he put up he passed himself off as a fugitive peasant who desired an interview with the bishop, that he might tell him of the sufferings of himself and his fellow villagers. As his story was a probable one, he hoped there would be no opposition to his remaining there. He was told that the bishop arrived two days before in the company of the Duke of Luxemburg, and had brought a young novice to the convent of Saint Ursula. He had gone away again with the Duke, but only for a short time.

Whenever Jean ventured out of the inn, he took his way to the convent. He could see only its outer walls, and yet he was drawn to it over and over again. Near the convent stands the church of Saint Ursula. As its doors were always open there was nothing to prevent him from entering and praying fervently for the unhappy girl he had seen in the forest. One day he as usual selected a spot close to the wall between the church and the convent for his devotions. This wall must have been in frequent use, for there was a door in it opening upon a passage-way to the other buildings. While Jean was praying the church was empty, and in the gathering shades of evening the sacred room was quiet and restful. In the profound silence it seemed to him that he heard human sobs in the distance. He listened intently. There could be no doubt of it. He was not deceived. The sound seemed to come out of the wall. He placed

his ear against the stone, and distinctly heard a woman's painful ejaculations between alternate groans and gentle sobs. A cold sweat stood on his brow. He felt rooted to the spot. The longer he listened the fiercer grew the storm in his breast. At last he could endure it no longer. He rushed out into the air. His heart was almost bursting. "The captive lady!" he cried, "can it be she?"

His despair drew him again to the spot, and again he listened. His pulse beat so feverishly, and he was under such excitement, that it was impossible for him to judge calmly, but he fancied he recognized the voice.

During the remainder of his stay in Rouen Jean spent his time almost exclusively in trying to discover the fate of this unfortunate one, but it was in vain. He only found that he was drawing attention to himself, and this attention at last became so apparent that after delivering the letter to the Bishop he was forced to leave Rouen abruptly and make his way back.

III — The Conspiracy

Four leagues distant from Cambray* the towers of Beaurevoir Castle rise from forest-crowned heights. In selecting this spot the builders combined the useful and the beautiful, for the castle was famous both for its strength and for its attractive situation. The view from the upper windows and from the towers repaid the appreciative observer at any season of the year, but he would have lingered longest in admiration when park and gardens, wood and meadow, field and grove were decked in the beauty of early spring, when the thickly clustered villages, east, west, and north, smiled amid their luxuriant crops, or when on the southern heights the Argonne forest was clad in its most gorgeous greenery. How much more attractive the beauties of this spot must have been to a child whose greatest delight was to be among the flowers of the garden and meadow, the birds in the parks, and the varied scenery!

*A town in the department of Nord, France, famous for the manufacture of cambrics, which take their name from it.

How closely such a child must have been attached to such a spot! How strong its temptation to pass all its time with nature!

Just such a child as this had been allured to the park and gardens by the sunshine of an early April day in the year last named,—a girl blooming with color, vigorous with health. At a distance she appeared to be about eighteen years of age, but closer observation showed she could not have been much over fifteen. Of all the beautiful things in this beautiful scene she was the most attractive, as she frolicked and skipped about like a fawn, bounding over the flowery meadows for the first time. As she ran about in the sunshine she gave expression to her childish joy at each fresh manifestation of the marvellous work of spring, and broke out in most exultant exclamations when she discovered the first violets in the grass.

Two ladies slowly following her, and engaged in earnest conversation, were attracted by her outcries. "There now," said one of them, a somewhat slender person with angular features and sharp eyes, "you see what an undisciplined creature she is. Is it proper for her to behave in such a manner? This comes of letting her have her own way. How often have I protested! But of what use is it? When you see that your talking is of no avail it is best to hold your tongue. If you do not, then they say, 'Oh, yes, that's the way envious old spinsters always talk.'"

The other lady, whose handsome face, beaming with good nature, was in striking contrast with that of her companion,

cast an appealing glance at her. “Oh, dear Rosette, are you not mistaken? Who would dare to insult my husband’s sister by making such a remark?”

“Oh, well, you know people often think many things they do not say.”

“That is true. But even if they do, why should you conclude they are thinking things about you they do not venture to say?”

“I cannot give you any precise reason.”

“Then I must tell you it is not kind to think evil of others, especially of your own friends, unless you have sufficient cause to do so. But never mind. You were speaking of Marie. You are offended with the behavior of the poor child.”

“Child! A fine child she is,—ha! ha! You ought to have known some time ago that she is no longer a child. She is a grown-up girl.”

“Let us hope she may not discover it for a long time yet. How happy she would be if she could always preserve her childlike nature! Look at her, dear Rosette! Is it not a beautiful sight —such an innocent child, sporting in pure delight?”

The sister-in-law turned up her nose.

“But why is not her behavior proper?” continued the other. “Proper! What is proper? Are not many things proper which are called highly improper? Marie is in her own world here. She has grown up in it, is attached to it, and enjoys herself in it. You cannot imagine how delighted I am to see her thus. Poor little one! Orphaned at an early age, she has never known

the comfort of a father's or mother's embraces, and shall I begrudge her her harmless pleasures?"

"It would be much better if she were to begin leading a more quiet and serious life right away, in preparation for her future."

"What has the future in store for her?"

"Is she not intended for the convent?"

"Who says so? She is sole heir of Louis of Chafleur, who has left her a rich property. Why should she take the veil?"

"She will not take it voluntarily. I think it is the wish of your husband."

"I think you are mistaken. At least, I do not know of any such plan. John simply said that a convent would be the safest retreat for Marie in case the tumult of war should invade the Argonne forest. To seek the shelter of a convent and to take the veil are two different things."

Rosette's eyes glistened with malicious triumph as she looked at Marie, who at that instant came bounding forward with a bunch of violets and put an end to the conversation; her look seemed to say, "I know some things better than you."

While this was going on in the park, two men were standing at an upper window of the castle. They were considerably beyond middle age, and resembled one another in a certain cold, crafty, calculating expression of countenance. One of them wore the usual costume of a knight, the other the conventional dress of a high church dignitary. One was John

of Luxemburg, lord of the castle; the other, Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais.

"The girl is really a handsome child," said the Bishop, as he looked at Marie.

"Oh, yes," slowly assented the lord of the castle. "But," he added with a peculiar twinkle of the eye, "I know something that is more beautiful."

The prelate understood. "Hm! I won't dispute that. These are fine possessions. It would be a pity to have them pass into the hands of strangers."

"You have echoed my very thought, your reverence. So I think we are agreed on the general point."

"You mean that in these times of disturbance there is no place where Marie will be so secure as in the cell of a convent."

"Exactly, and unless I am mistaken that is also what you mean."

"In a general sense, yes; but we have not yet considered the most important point."

"Let us come to it."

"The question arises, How is the girl to be secured for the convent? and next, How is she to be taken there?"

"I will see that she is taken there. As to the rest of the business, I appeal to the experience of your reverence."

"Hm! a difficult task when, as in this case, the novice has the utmost aversion to a convent."

"It is not so difficult as appears at first sight. I know of similar cases where the task has been successfully accomplished."

"Yes, but under peculiar circumstances."

"The circumstances in our case are similar."

The Bishop's face wore a crafty expression. "That is truly quite another thing. Let us hear about it."

"Of course Marie's property remains in possession of her guardian until she reaches legal age, when it is at her disposal."

"That is clear. But what will the Church get?"

"Patience, your reverence. If she should not reach that age —and that is not impossible—"

"Well?"

"I understand that in such a case the property is legally mine."

"That is also clear. But what will the Church get?"

"In that case we can make an agreement as to how much the Church shall have."

"We understand each other, noble knight. But supposing she reaches legal age?"

"Then the Church must see to it that the legal requirements are not binding. I say 'legal requirements.' You understand me, holy father?"

"Perfectly, my noble friend. Sometimes we have had to grant exemptions from requirements which afterwards were shown to have been void because of irregularities."

"I am glad we understand each other so well."

"Yes, but what will the Church get?"

"The same as in the other case, namely, a share of the property, only the Church will not come into actual possession until after the death of the testatrix."

"Hm! It seems to me, my noble friend, that you not only propose to take the lion's share, but the entire prize. The Church would have the first claim in case of death."

"You haven't let me finish, your reverence. Until the death of the heir I will secure you, as the representative of the Church, a yearly income of three hundred pounds."

The Bishop's eyes glistened. "And the security?" he said, stretching out his hand.

"My word, the word of a nobleman;" and they shook hands.

A pause ensued. Each of the men, in the stillness, seemed to be studying whether he might not find eventually that he had been overreached and had not received his proper share. The Bishop was the first to come to a decision, and asked, "When shall we begin our work, noble friend?"

"At once, if you are ready." Thereupon he rang a bell, and ordered the servant who answered it to call Mademoiselle de Chafleur.

It was not long before Marie came running into the room, full of joyous exultation. "Dear uncle, see these beautiful violets," she cried. "Oh, what delicious perfume!"

"Very beautiful indeed. They are messengers sent by Spring to the other flowers."

“Dear uncle, see these beautiful violets,” she cried.

"It must be so. Oh, you cannot imagine how beautiful the park is already! Tell me quickly what I am to do, so that I can return soon."

"So you find it very pleasant in the park?"

"Oh, I could stay there always."

"I am all the more sorry, then, that you will have to leave it soon."

"What! Leave! Uncle, I do not understand you."

"Yes, child. The tumult of war approaches nearer and nearer."

"What of that? Is not the castle safe? Let the Englishmen come. We will send those long-nosed gentlemen home again. Yes, 'we,' I say, for you know I am a Chafleur."

"I have the highest respect for your courage, my little Amazon, but the English will not be greatly scared by it. No, child, I must find a safer place for you."

"And my aunts?"

"Oh, that is a different matter. My wife and sister must submit to the inevitable."

"And I can also."

"No, child. Your father sacredly intrusted you to me. I should not be keeping my word if I exposed you to the dangers of war."

"But I say again, uncle, and you have said yourself, that the castle is safe enough."

"Still it can be taken; but no enemy will dare to attack the sacred walls of a convent."

“A convent! What do you mean? Do you intend to make me a nun? Me! A nun! Ha! ha! ha! I shall die a-laughing.”

“It is not always nuns who find shelter in a convent.”

“Nevertheless, uncle, and once for all, I say I will have nothing to do with a convent.”

“Then tell me what you will do, for you cannot stay here.”

“Are you in earnest, uncle?”

“Absolutely so.”

The tears came to the girl’s eyes. Sobbing, and throwing her arms around his neck, she exclaimed: “Uncle, you cannot send me away from you.”

“It is for your safety, my child.”

“But I do not wish any special safety. Where my aunts can stay, I can stay.”

“It is of no use. No use. My decision is final.”

The girl stood erect. She wiped the tears from her eyes and looked at the knight with a strange and distressed expression. Gradually her look became colder and more fixed, and at last he realized her undaunted determination.

“My decision is made too, uncle. I will not go to a convent. I would rather fall into the hands of the English. But the situation is not so desperate as that. I will let my kinsman La Hire know. He will protect me. Let me have a messenger, uncle. In an hour I will have a letter ready.” Thereupon she left the room.

“Well, what do you think now, noble knight?” began the Bishop.

“Pah!” he replied, “I will send her a messenger who will throw her letter into the first forest brook he comes to, and return without seeing La Hire.”

On the morning of the fourteenth day after this scene, a heavy travelling carriage stood in the castle yard with an escort of six armed men. Marie lay sobbing in the arms of Madame de Luxemburg. Still sobbing, she at last followed the impatient lord of the castle to the carriage. Nothing had been heard from La Hire, and when, as John of Luxemburg had said, an attack upon the castle was likely to be made, he told Marie he would accompany her to her kinsman. At the first inn they met the Bishop of Beauvais, apparently by accident. As he was journeying in the same direction he accepted the knight’s invitation to take a seat in the carriage.

Overcome with grief, and not expecting any trickery, Marie at first did not notice the road they were taking. After passing three or four inns, however, she saw that they were going west instead of south. Not even then did she suspect treachery. They easily satisfied her inquiries by pretending they must take a circuitous route to avoid encountering the English. When, however, they kept on in the same direction the next day, her suspicions were fully aroused.

“Uncle,” she said, “you cannot deceive me any longer; you are not taking me to Chinon. What are you going to do with me?”

"I will not deceive you, child," replied the knight, for pretense was useless any longer. "I cannot carry out my plan to take you to Chinon. The whole district of the Loire is in the hands of the English. I cannot even get back to Beaurevoir, so nothing remains but—"

"But what?" she piteously exclaimed.

"The convent."

She uttered a scream of terror.

"Be quiet," said the knight, harshly. "If you scream again I will silence you in a way that may not be agreeable."

They were in a forest where fugitive peasants might be in hiding. Even at a distance from it, he had been fearful lest the girl might attract some one's attention. He wished to reach his destination without being observed, and was particularly anxious no one should even suspect where he was or what he was doing.

Marie was not frightened by his threat, but a quick glance showed her they were in a forest where no help of any kind could be expected. In despair she sank back into a corner of the carriage. Anger, desperation, and scorn raged by turns in her breast, until at last, overcome by exhaustion, she buried her face in her hands and wept.

The vigorous "halt" of a manly voice aroused her from her wretched condition. In an instant she was at the carriage door. Her first glance fell upon a handsome youth who was

advancing courageously toward the carriage. The reader knows who he was.

"Help! help!" she involuntarily cried. "They are taking me to a convent."

Her guardian pulled her back, and silenced her cries by holding his handkerchief over her mouth. She tried desperately to release herself,—but what availed her weakness against the strength of a trained knight? In her anguish the image of the brave youth rose before her, and her anxiety about his fate made her forget her own. She listened intently to all that was going on outside. She trembled when it seemed impossible for her to escape, but at last she exulted when she knew that he was safe.

It was late at night when the carriage came to a stop. Marie knew by the call of a watchman that they were either before a city or a castle. The Bishop gave his name, and the creaking gate opened. The carriage passed through several dark streets, and stopped at last before a large, gloomy building. Here also the Bishop's name was an Open Sesame; the heavy bolts were pushed back, the carriage rolled over a paved yard, and with a hollow, fateful sound the gate was closed and locked.

Marie shook as in an ague fit. She realized that she was a prisoner, and perhaps was cut off from all the pleasures of life; but not a sound escaped her lips. Her mute sorrow alone reproached her persecutors. She did not know she was in the Ursuline Convent at Rouen, but she had no doubt it was some

convent in the Bishop's diocese. Evidently they were ready to receive an exalted guest, whom they had expected, in a manner befitting her station. The abbess, a lady of middle age, who, judging by her speech and manners, might have been of high rank, was awaiting her in the parlor. After the Bishop had exchanged a few words with her, the abbess turned to Marie and said: "May your entrance among us be blest, Mademoiselle de Chafleur. I hope these sacred walls will furnish you both the outward security which you need, and your heart that peace which the world cannot give."

There was something so cordial, and withal so winning, in the tone with which she spoke these words, that Marie pressed her extended hand to her lips with the utmost sincerity, and covered it with kisses. She longed to throw herself into the arms of this gracious lady, and weep away her sorrow as she would on a mother's breast. Her longing was so overpowering that she sank upon her knees and moistened the abbess's hand with her tears.

"Save me, gracious lady, save me," she implored. "I am the victim of a conspiracy. They have deceived me, brought me here by force, and torn me from all that is dear and sacred to me."

The astonished abbess cast an inquiring glance at the Bishop. "The novice," he said in reply to it, "is here because it is the wish of her guardian, a lord of Luxemburg, who alone

has authority to act for her. Therefore it is idle to talk of force. To your—"

"I am not a novice," cried Marie, rising. "I am Marie of Chafleur. My guardian has control of my property, but he has no right arbitrarily to dispose of my person."

"I trust your ability," resumed the Bishop, "to remove these worldly ideas, which are unbecoming within these sacred walls, and to implant in this perverse soul the spirit of quiet resignation and Christian humility. I authorize you to employ all the means which are at your command to produce this result, and I have no doubt of their efficacy."

The last words were spoken with a peculiar intonation which was in the nature of a command to the abbess, but of the significance of which the poor child had not the most remote idea. The abbess, who understood well enough what was expected from her, made a quiet sign of assent, and the two men took their leave, firmly convinced that their work was completed successfully.

Marie was assigned to the usual cell and left alone. She first went to the grated window. It looked out only upon the yard. With a pitiful sob she threw herself upon the hard couch. Her tears flowed, and she gave vent to her anguish in melancholy ejaculations. At last she knelt before the crucifix and poured out her aching heart in long and fervent prayer. Again she quietly sought her couch. She was now able to think calmly over recent events. As she was ignorant of what was in store

for her, she was still buoyant with the hopefulness of youth. She thought of La Hire, whom she had known as an honorable knight. The image of the young man also mingled pleasantly in her thoughts of the future. She decided she would write again to La Hire. He could not have deserted her. Thus consoling herself, she sank into kindly slumber. Poor child! Little she knew that her letters could not find their way into the outside world without first being read by the superior.

One day two nuns, commissioned to acquaint her with the rules of the Ursuline order, visited her. Her declaration that she did not wish to know them made no impression upon the sisters. They performed their duty, and then withdrew to make their report. Shortly afterwards another sister entered, and summoned the novice to prepare herself by prayer and fasting for the vow which she was shortly to take.

"What means this farce?" said Marie. "I am not a novice. I will not join your order. I will not take a vow."

"Our wishes are useless within these walls," replied the sister. "We must do what the superior, the abbess, and the rules of the order command."

"What is that to me? I am not one of you."

"You will do well, sister, to submit to the inevitable."

"And what if I do not?"

"Then they will force you to submit."

"Force me, Marie of Chafleur! I should like to hear how they propose to do it."

"I can tell you, sister. They will lock you in your cell and let you go half starved."

"Well, I would rather wholly starve than take the vow."

"They will thrust you into a gloomy prison."

"Go on."

"They will come daily to your prison and punish you without mercy."

Marie shrieked aloud. She clenched her fists. Her lips quivered. "Woman," she at last exclaimed, "the devil has sent you to tempt me! Leave me. Go and report that I will suffer death rather than consent."

"I must first do what I have been ordered, sister." Thereupon the nun knelt before the crucifix and repeated aloud the prayers which were prescribed as a preparation for the vow. When she had finished she withdrew. What she had said came to pass. Marie first was locked in her cell and given only a scanty bit of bread. When that proved of no avail she was put into the prison. It was her loud laments which Jean had heard while praying in the church of Saint Ursula, for the prison was only separated from the church by a single wall.

IV — In Camp and Court

News of the siege of the City of Orleans by the English at last reached the village of Domremy. No one was more deeply affected by it than Joan, for she believed from what her confessor had told the villagers that with the fall of Orleans the King's cause would be lost, that there was no hope for the raising of the siege, and that the wretchedness of the fatherland would then be complete.

Scarcely had Joan heard the news before she left the village to meditate upon this new situation in some one of her favorite solitudes. She was at this time about seventeen years of age, blooming and beautiful in person, but unchanged in nature and habits. She longed to abandon herself to her thoughts and impressions in solitude as she used to do when tending her father's flocks. Deep down in her heart she felt the sorrows of others now as she did then, and was moved by the same irresistible desire to help them. She longed to prostrate herself before her saints, to look into the clouds with supernatural

vision and see their figures and hear their voices as she used to do. Her communion with the spiritual world at this time had become so intimate that she could question her saints and hear their instant replies. The Fairy Tree, under which she fed the birds, the miraculous spring where the fawns frisked about her, and the chapel at the cross-road near the oak forest, in which she had most of her visions, were her favorite resorts. In this chapel she knelt before the image of Saint Catherine, unconscious of the outside world. The burden of her fervent prayer was the necessities of the country, the rescue of the City of Orleans, and the coronation of the King.

"O that I were a man! O that I were a commander!" she sighed. "I would rush to the rescue. Perhaps it is not impossible. Does not the wolf fly from me when my saints are near? Can I not hide my maiden's figure in the garb of the soldier? Are not these limbs strong enough to wear armor? What if the dear saints should commission me to rescue the fatherland!"

Absorbed in such thoughts and longings, she lost herself in communion with the celestial world, and in a vision she saw her favorite saints in the glowing clouds.

"Why do you tarry, Joan?" said the voices. "Cities and villages are being destroyed every day. Daily the blood of the people is being shed. Arise! Execute the decree of Heaven."

"But," said Joan, "how may I know it is Heaven which sends me?"

"The signs of your mission will not fail."

"And what is my mission?"

"To raise the siege of the city of Orleans, and conduct the King to his coronation at Rheims."

"How shall I begin?"

"Go to the King and offer yourself to him as commander of the army."

"To whom shall I apply so that I may reach the King?"

"Go to the knight, Robert of Baudricourt.* He will help you."

Joan returned home, and remained several days deeply absorbed in contemplating the mission to which she had been assigned. She would often steal away to her little chamber and weep bitterly; for although she felt exalted by the heavenly decree, still, it seemed impossible for her secretly to leave all the dear ones at home,—father, mother, brothers, and sister. And yet she must go secretly, for her father never would approve of her purpose or consent to her going, and no other way suggested itself. They had grown so accustomed to seeing her absorbed in silent and solitary meditations that they kept aloof from her at such times. It had been village gossip for years that she communicated with spirits and practised magic. In what other way indeed could her mastery of the wild beasts be explained? Her brother Pierre, however, who was devotedly attached to her, was an exception. He never pained

*Robert of Baudricourt was the governor of Vaucouleurs.

her by suspicions. She had no secrets from him, and she came to him now in perfect confidence and wept upon his breast.

"It is not true, Pierre," she said, looking up at him with her beautiful tearful eyes, "that you mock at me as the others do?"

"How can you think such a thing of me, little sister?"

"Oh, I do not think it, my brother."

"And yet your question seems to imply that you do."

"Not at all, Pierre. I know very well that you love me, but you must tell me so over and over again. I know very well you do not mock me, but even that does not satisfy me. I must have the assurance from your own lips."

"I know very well, Joan, that you are a favorite with your saints, that they manifest themselves to you in the clouds, and that you talk with them as you talk with us."

"Yes; you believe me when I tell you these things. But when I tell the others—"

"Oh, my sister, they do not know you as I do. I know that you never speak an untruth."

"And yet my actions now must be deceitful. Alas! Pierre, that is what distresses me."

"But remember, little sister, that you are obeying the celestial ones, that it is the fatherland which calls you."

"And still it grieves me, my brother. I go about here just as usual. Father, mother, and all the others think that I shall always go on this way, and I let them think so, and purposely

strengthen this belief while I am preparing to leave them secretly. Oh, Pierre, they will never forgive me."

"Why should you distress yourself with such thoughts, my sister? You know that you must undertake this mission. And it is right you should, for the will of Heaven is superior to the human will. When father and mother and the others hear what Heaven has accomplished through you, do you not think they will forgive you?"

"Your words have done me good, my brother," cried Joan, her clear, brilliant eyes shining with happiness. "Would that I could always have you by my side and hear your voice! If you were near I would fear no one whom I may encounter."

"I will go with you, my sister."

"No, Pierre, you cannot."

"And why not?"

"Is it not enough for me to bring sorrow to our parents? Would you add to that sorrow by secretly going away also?"

"You are right. I ought not to go. You are obeying the decree of Heaven, but I cannot offer that plea. But I know of some one who might go with you."

"Who?"

"Uncle Laxart. He also loves you, and he will not have to ask permission of any one."

"But will he go?"

"I will speak to him about it."

The next day (in the year 1429)—it was the day of the Three Holy Kings—Joan crossed the snow-covered valley to the Fairy Tree, sprinkled crumbs for the birds as usual, and listened to their grateful songs. Soon afterwards she was lost in deep reverie in the chapel at the cross-roads, and while in this state her enraptured eyes beheld her saints, Catherine and Margaret, in the clouds.

"The hour has come, Joan," she heard them say. "Arise! the Queen of Heaven will be with you."

"But I must go all alone," she replied. "They will call me an adventuress."

"Not so! Your protector is already at the door."

As Joan arose she saw a man approaching the chapel. With joyous surprise she recognized her uncle, Duram Laxart.

"I know all, Joan," he exclaimed. "I am ready to escort you as soon as you need my protection. I have already been to Vaucouleurs and have seen the knight Baudricourt. Start as soon as you can get ready. We will lodge with Wagner, whom you know."

Before the astonished maiden could reply her uncle was off in the direction of Vaucouleurs.

The time for departure had come at last. Deeply agitated, she stood at the door of the chapel, and looked once more with tearful eyes out over the valley. Once more her gaze lingered upon the miraculous spring, the Fairy Tree, and her home

at Domremy, and her soul was filled with tender and sacred associations.

"Farewell, O Wonder Tree, where I have spent so many happy hours," she said between her sobs. "And you, little birds, farewell! Alas! Joan can never feed you again. In vain will you wait for her. Farewell, dear spring, whose music I have heard so often in my happy dreams. Tell the deer I cannot play with them again. Farewell, loved valleys and fields! How happy I was when I played here with the companions of my childhood! Alas! I shall never see you again! Farewell, my father! My beloved mother, farewell! And you, my Pierre, my good, dear brother. Oh, how hard it is to leave you! Alas! never again shall I look into your true eyes, never again hear words of love and sympathy from your lips. Farewell all, all farewell! Grieve not that I leave you. Be not angry. It cannot be otherwise. No! it must be so, for Heaven has decreed it, and the fatherland has called me. Away, Joan, away! The struggle is at hand."

No one could have seen the simple peasant maiden at that moment, her eyes shining as the tears glistened on their lashes, no one could have realized her strength of will in giving up all that had filled her soul with sorrow as she thought of leaving it, no one could have watched her passing down the valley like a soldier defiant of danger, without the conviction that it was an event fraught with the highest significance for France.

Joan found her uncle at Wagner's house in Vaucouleurs. He had already called upon Baudricourt, but was sent away with instructions to reprove his silly niece and take her back to her parents. Though not in the least discouraged, Joan spent the night in prayer, and in the morning went to see Baudricourt. She found him in the company of Jean de Nouillemport de Metz. Both laughed when they learned the nature of her errand, but she spoke with such sincere conviction of her celestial visions that Baudricourt at last dismissed her with a promise to give the matter serious consideration. Subsequently, when Joan prayed in the church, and the people came in crowds to see "the saint," a priest approached her with a crucifix to see if she was possessed of the devil. Joan fell upon her knees and kissed the holy symbol, and the priest declared, "She may be mad but she is not possessed." On her way out of the church she met the knight Nouillemport de Metz, to whom she thus appealed: "Alas! No one will believe me, and yet France can be saved only by me." The words reminded him of the prophecy of Merlin. After observing her more closely, and recognizing her spiritual purity and her resolute determination of purpose, he expressed his willingness to take her to the Dauphin, and he had little difficulty in persuading Baudricourt to join him. A few days afterwards Joan was delighted to find herself on the way to Chinon with the knights and their men at arms. In her costume she looked like a slim, handsome page rather than a trooper. Chinon was more than one hundred and fifty leagues

away, and for half that distance the country was occupied by the English. Hence they were obliged to make wide circuits, and frequently halt in the forests and ford rivers. After a fourteen days' march they reached the city of Gien* on the Loire. The news spread like wildfire that the Maiden who, according to Merlin's prophecy, was to rescue France, had come, and all hastened to extend her an enthusiastic welcome.

After leaving Gien there was little danger, and at last they safely reached Chinon and put up at an inn. Here, as at Gien, the news of Joan's arrival spread rapidly, and attracted a great crowd. To satisfy the universal curiosity, she appeared on the balcony and was welcomed with enthusiastic shouts. Her knightly companions promptly waited upon the Dauphin; but they found him greatly discouraged and in a despondent mood because of the news that the Englishman, John Falstaff, had repulsed the French, who tried to prevent him from taking supplies of herring to his countrymen before Orleans. The Dauphin's disappointment over the "herrings day" defeat, however, would have been short-lived had he not at the same time been overtaken by a calamity which seemed to him even worse, namely, his utter lack of money and the consequent emptiness of his kitchen and cellar. In such a mood Joan's companions found him. At first he listened to them with indifference and a contemptuous smile, but when they told

*Gien is in the department of Loiret, and thirty-eight miles in a direct line from Orleans. Its principal industry is the manufacture of faience.

him the people had recognized the Maiden as a saint, and welcomed her as the rescuer of France, it occurred to him she might be instrumental in relieving his necessitous condition. At last he ordered that she should be admitted. To test the prophetic gift ascribed to her, he received her standing among the nobles of his court, while another person sat on the throne.

Joan recognized him at once, however, and advancing to him, knelt, and greeted him with these words: "God grant you a long and happy life, Dauphin."*

"You are mistaken," he replied. "Yonder is the King," pointing to the person on the throne.

"Noble prince," she answered, "you cannot deceive me. You are the Dauphin." A murmur of astonishment ran through the hall.

"Sire," she continued, "if we can be alone I will tell you something that will remove all doubt as to my mission."†

The Dauphin conducted her to the adjacent oratory, and there, according to the tradition, she revealed things to him which he was certain none could know but God and himself. He was so sure of this that at the close of the interview he

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*Joan called him "Dauphin" because she did not consider him a king until he was crowned.

†The doubt which was thrown upon the King's legitimacy greatly weighed upon his spirits. This doubt Joan removed. Her words to him are thus reported: "On the part of my Lord, I tell thee thou art true heir of France and son of the King, and he sends me to lead thee to Rheims to the end thou may'st receive thy crown and thy coronation if thou wilt."

exclaimed: “I am convinced of your divine commission, but my councillors must also be convinced.”

“Very well, sire,” she replied. “Summon the three most learned and experienced to meet me in the morning, and I will give them a sign.” Her wish was gratified. The three selected were the Archbishop of Rheims, Charles of Bourbon, and De la Tremouille, the King’s minister. They first required her to give her history, and then they asked for the sign. Joan went back to the oratory. Then, according to tradition, the heavenly ones appeared, and with them an angel in long white raiment. The latter carried a brilliant crown and slowly advanced into the audience-room.

“Sire,” said the angel, “trust this maiden whom Heaven sends to you. Give her at once as many soldiers as you can raise. As a sign that you shall be crowned at Rheims, Heaven sends you this token.” Thereupon the angel handed the crown to the Archbishop, went out as he had entered, and disappeared through the ceiling of the oratory. So says the tradition.

The three councillors were not yet fully satisfied, however. They suggested that Joan should be examined by the learned theologians of the University of Poitiers.* When they also asked her for a sign, she replied: “Give me soldiers and you shall have signs enough.” They finally reported that she was

*Poitiers is the capital of the department of Vienne, and is famous not alone for its university, but for its cathedral and the Temple de St. Jean, the oldest Christian structure in France.

trustworthy, and that the King ought to accept her service. The Dauphin's council promptly decided to raise as many troops as possible, place the Maiden in command of them, and send her with a convoy of supplies to Orleans. In these few days popular sentiment had changed rapidly, cheerful self-sacrifice and enthusiastic eagerness for action took the place of discouragement and dissension. Knights and their men at arms offered their services, and wealthy burghers sacrificed their treasures for the cause of the country. The Dauphin at last was also in a cheerful frame of mind, for his treasury was filling up and he could once more take some pleasure in living. He was also in a position now to be of service to the Maiden. He presented her with a general's outfit,—a master of horse, two pages, two heralds, and a chaplain.

About this time the Duc d'Alençon* returned from English captivity. He noticed with great delight that every one was eager to follow the Maiden into battle. He immediately mortgaged his property, purchased war equipment, and accepted the duty of preparing the convoy of supplies. Joan met with an affectionate welcome from his wife, who had come to Blois, where the preparations were going on.

The twenty-sixth of April, 1429, was fixed as the day of departure. Joan had previously sent her herald Guienne with

*The Duke d'Alençon was a relative of the King, and had been held prisoner by the English for three years. He was released upon the promise of a heavy ransom.

a letter to the Duke of Bedford*, which she had dictated to her chaplain. It ran thus:

This letter, however, never was answered. The herald did not come back.

On the day appointed the expedition set out from Blois. At its head was a procession of priests singing hymns, Joan's chaplain leading them with his banner. Next followed the leaders, Duc d'Alençon, Marshal de Retz, Admiral de Coulent, De la Maison, Laval, Potou de Saintrailles, Count Dunois and La Hire, in whose retinue was Jean Renault. Then came two hundred horsemen, and a long train of wagons loaded with supplies brought up the rear. Joan in full armor, wearing a shining helmet which covered her closely cropped locks, and carrying a sword whose hilt and scabbard were ornamented with lilies, rode among the leaders. Upon one side of her banner, which was thickly sprinkled with lilies, was a picture of the Saviour with the orb in His hand and an angel on either side of Him; on the other, the inscription, "Jesus, Maria."† Her

*The Duke of Bedford, an English general and statesman, was John Plantagenet, third son of Henry IV, and at this time regent of France. He was conspicuous in the prosecution of Joan of Arc.

†Joan of Arc, testifying at her trial, said: "I had a banner of which the field was sprinkled with lilies; the world was painted there, with an angel at each side; it was white, of the white cloth called bocasine; there was written above, I believe, "; it was fringed with silk. Because the Voices had said to me, 'Take the standard in the name of the King of Heaven,' I had this figure of God and of two angels done. I did all by their command."

demeanor was serious and dignified, serene confidence shone in her beaming eyes. Her only regrets were the profanity of the soldiers and La Hire's loud prayer every morning and evening: "Dear God! do for La Hire as he would do for Thee if he were the dear God and Thou wert La Hire."

On the third day they were before Orleans, but the city was on the other side of the Loire, and there was no bridge. They occupied a redoubt on their side of the river, which the English had abandoned because it was of no use to them. At this juncture the Bastard of Orleans,* commander of the city, came in a barge to meet them. By his advice they went two leagues farther up the river and made a halt near Castle Chécy, where they found a French garrison. Count Dunois agreed to send a fleet for the transportation of the supplies, but at three in the afternoon it had not come. The sky was overcast, thunder growled in the distance, and the waves of the Loire were lashed by fierce winds. The courage of the soldiers began to waver.

"When this storm subsides," said the Duc d'Alençon, "the English vessels will be here instead of ours, and then all will be lost."

"Ah, you forget," said the Maiden, "that I promised you in the name of God we should enter Orleans successfully."

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*Count Jean Dunois, called the "Bastard of Orleans," was born in 1402, and died in 1468. He was the natural son of Louis, Duke of Orleans, and Mariette d'Enghien, and at this time was in command at Orleans.

"H'm! it does not look as if you could keep your promise," replied the Duke.

"Have a little patience," said Joan, as she closely scanned the sky. "Before a quarter of an hour passes the wind will change." She retired a little distance to pray, but hardly had she knelt before a favoring wind sprung up and the vessels which had been detained by the storm arrived.

"Now what do you think of that, Jean?" said La Hire, as they began loading the supplies.

"I think, noble sir," replied the youth, "that the Maiden in her pastoral life has had ample opportunity to observe the wind and weather, and is therefore able to predict changes like these."

"Oho! Then she is an impostor!"

"Why so, noble sir?"

"Do you not understand? Does she not make people believe that the winds change in answer to her prayers?"

"Oh no, certainly not. She does not pray on account of the wind. She prays because prayer is a necessity to her, because of the impelling forces of her nature, and because she feels happy in communing with Heaven. Her special prayer is for strength and help from on high for her great work, which is beginning this very hour."

"H'm! But she deceives the multitude by it, just the same."

"She does only what she must do. Does the sun lave itself every evening in the sea just because the people believe it does?"

"I am not criticising you, my young friend, but one minute you deny the supernatural in the manifestations of the Maiden, and in the next you extol her to the very skies."

"What are wonders anyway, noble sir? What the blind multitude regards as a wonder easily resolves itself into harmony with nature to the reflective person, and what the multitude passes by without observing at all is a wonder to the intelligent thinker."

"Explain yourself more clearly."

"As to the first point, the Maiden herself is a sufficient illustration. Do not these people recognize a wonder in this change of wind, while you see nothing at all extraordinary in it? As to the other point there are a thousand illustrations. The sky with its stars, the flowers of the field, the worm in the dust,—all these are wonders of creation which the multitude scarcely notices, but which are marvellous to the observant thinker."

"And this Maiden?"

"She is a wonder in both ways, and therein lies her extraordinary power. She is believed to be a prophetess who has direct communication with Heaven. The people regard her as an actually divine wonder, because of her purity of heart, her celestial confidence, her unsullied patriotism, and her spiritual illumination. Indeed, noble sir, the Maiden is a wonderful gift of Heaven to stricken France."

"Then you also believe in her success apart from her divine commission?"

"I do not dispute her divine commission. She is executing it because the divine voice in her own heart has charged her with that duty. Do I believe in her success? Look at these people! How their eyes are fixed upon this Maiden! At her command of 'forward' they would plunge into the Loire and follow her, believing that its waters would bear them up. Will you not yourself, noble sir, although you do not believe in her divine commission, gladly draw your sword when the lily banner waves before you? If the spirit which Joan has roused in our little band is animating all France, how can we do otherwise than expect success?"

"You are right, my young friend," said La Hire, extending his hand. "I thank your gallant father in his grave for the training he gave you. Yes, yes, it must be so,—when religious or political enthusiasms fire a people, great results always follow. In this case it is a joint enthusiasm. The victory will be ours, and we shall thank the Maiden for it. I will not again grieve her with my prayers. When it is prayer time I will go so far off that she cannot hear me. But one thing more, Jean. Have you heard anything about Marie?"

"Alas! noble sir, I have not. As you well know, I have not ceased making inquiries, but as in your case, the turmoil of war has prevented me from obtaining personal information."

"Yes, yes, I know. I cannot tell you how that poor child's situation troubles me. I have waited from week to week for an opportunity to speak a few words to this lord of Luxemburg and his bishop"—and his grip of his sword indicated what kind of words he had in mind. "But let us hope," he resumed, "that the Maiden whom we serve may open the way to Marie's release. First, we must send the English to the devil. After that nothing shall prevent me from finding Marie, and"—casting a significant glance at Jean—"I know who will stand by me."

"To the end of the world, noble sir," cried the youth, his flashing eyes showing that the words came from his heart.

"Good, good, I am sure of it; but it is time that we were off." He pointed to the last of the vessels, which was held for the troops. Soon they came to the line of the English intrenchments, which stretched around the city.

"Well," growled La Hire, "these English gentlemen do not like to show themselves, and yet it would be an easy matter to break these nutshells. I wonder if they have run away."

"They are there, and can see us," said Jean. "They are lying behind the walls, but they have no ordnance to use against us."

It turned out as Jean said. The English made no assault, and the little flotilla reached the city unharmed. There was unbounded enthusiasm when the Maiden appeared with her banner at the gates. The people would have carried her in their arms had not the commander of the city forestalled them by

having a horse in readiness for her. She mounted and rode in triumph to the cathedral, where a *Te Deum* was sung, the first which had been heard for a long time within its walls. Then she was escorted to the house of Jacques Boucher, treasurer of the Duke of Orleans, where she was to lodge. Now for the first time she put off her armor, drank a cup of wine diluted with water, and then withdrew with the wife and daughters of her host to her chamber. There was lively commotion in the streets until far into the night. All anxiety disappeared on that 29th of April, 1429. An old chronicle relates that the people and the soldiers believed an angel had come down from heaven to them. To the same extent that their despair had vanished and given place to joyous enthusiasm, courage waned in the English camp. Most of those brave soldiers, particularly the spearsmen and archers, believed the Maiden was either a messenger from heaven or from hell, either a saint or a mighty magician. Their leaders inveighed bitterly against the Dauphin because he employed unknightly weapons, weapons of hell.

On the next day Joan urged an immediate attack, but at a council of the most experienced leaders it was decided to wait at least for the arrival of the next contingent of troops from Blois. They did not altogether believe in Joan's divine commission, but they thought it best to take advantage of the popular enthusiasm which she had aroused. Count Dunois returned to Blois to hasten reinforcements forward, and on

the fourth day his banner was seen on the left bank of the Loire. His route led directly past the English encampment. Joan could no longer remain inactive. “We must go out and meet them and fetch them in,” she cried, at the same time mounting her steed, seizing her little battle-axe and banner, and riding to the gate. The knights shook their heads. No one was eager to rush directly into the jaws of the lion, for it did not seem possible that any one would come back if the English came out and attacked them.

“Now,” shouted La Hire, “no one shall say that La Hire has been outdone in courage by a woman. Forward,” he commanded, galloping after the Maiden, and followed by his little band. Count Dunois had halted some distance away, evidently awaiting help from the city. As soon as he saw the banners of the Maiden and La Hire he moved forward along the first line of intrenchments. The two forces soon met and advanced towards the city along the very front of the English camp, but such was the Englishmen’s fear of the Maiden that not one of them ventured out. No one even hurled a missile. They looked on quietly, as the little band passed their lines and safely reached the city. As further reinforcements were on their way, it was decided on the following day to attack Fort Saint Loup.

Early in the morning, while Joan, wearied by her exertions on the day before, was still sleeping, some of the captains sallied out with their troops and made a furious assault upon

the fort. The English, seeing only their customary assailants, fell upon them, and after a hard struggle beat them back. At that instant the Maiden, bearing her lily banner, rode to the Burgundian gate. "Halt!" she shouted to the fugitives. "Look you, the Maiden whom God sent to you is here. Follow me to victory." At once she plunged into the thick of battle. Her presence acted like magic on both sides. The French impetuously followed her, Daulon, Master of horse, La Hire, and two other knights, leading the first charge. The English wavered.

"Why do you hesitate?" cried Guerard, their leader. "Shame and confusion to any one who fears this country girl! Drive her back to her village and her father's cows."

His appeal was unheeded. The soldiers stood for a moment staring at the banner in the hand of "the witch," and then, as if at the word of command, rushed in a panic for the protecting walls of the fort. "On, my brave ones, forward to the battle and victory," cried Joan, as she furiously galloped after the fugitives.

"Now, soldiers of France!" said La Hire, "she is doing more than her share. On, my children! Shall we let this brave one do all the work alone?" He spurred his steed, but his heavy battle horse could not overtake the Maiden's light courser. The next instant a single knight of La Hire's troop flew after her, and in a few seconds his sword was waving at her side. It was Jean Renault. Enthusiasm such as he had never felt before had

seized him. He was oblivious to all sense of danger. Scarcely was the last Englishman through the fortress gate before the Maiden and Jean rushed through also. The astonished English soldiers saw the lily banner in their very midst. Before they had recovered from the deadly fear it inspired, it was flying on the wall. The French poured through the gate, and victory was soon complete. Those who resisted were cut down, and the rest were taken prisoners. Some of the fugitives had fled to the tower of the church within the walls, but these unfortunates were either killed upon the steps, or hurled themselves from the windows. A more fortunate remnant came out of the sacristy, where they had arrayed themselves in the robes of the priests. These were greeted with jibes and laughter as they begged of the Maiden to be made prisoners. Amid the peals of bells and the triumphal shouts of the people, the Maiden entered the city at the head of her soldiers.

Three days after this—a festival day intervening—the leaders decided to make a feint upon the right bank, covering an attack upon the left. As Orleans lies upon the right bank of the Loire, the commander of the city kept a large number of boats for crossing. In the midst of the stream, but somewhat nearer the left bank, is an island which the English had not occupied. The French landed upon this island, Joan and La Hire, with his troop, in the lead. The boats were fastened together and thus made a bridge to the left bank, over which they advanced for an attack upon the first fort, Le Blanc. It

would have been easy for the English to stop the passage, but they did not attempt it. After setting Fort Le Blanc on fire they fell back upon Fort Saint Augustine.

Joan followed them, and planted her banner half an arrowshot's distance from the wall. Suddenly there was a shout, "The English are coming from Fort St. Rivi." The little band retreated to the Loire, all save fifteen, La Hire and Jean among the latter. These fell back a little distance, so as not to expose themselves needlessly to the enemy's assault, seeing which the English plucked up courage and attacked them, shouting loudly.

"Follow me," cried Joan, waving her banner and advancing upon the English. The fifteen did not hesitate, rash as the undertaking seemed. They pressed forward, cutting their way through. When those who had retreated to the river saw this they came to their assistance, and in a few minutes the English were driven back into the fort. Joan rushed on until she reached the palisades, dashed through a breach which Daulon had made, and planted her banner on the wall. The French rapidly came up, captured the fort, and burned it. It may well be imagined this fresh victory was hailed with delight in the city. The bells again pealed as the soldiers entered, but their reception was a quiet one as compared with the enthusiastic homage which the Maiden received on her way to her lodgings.

Though Joan was wounded in the foot during the battle and passed a restless night, she was again on horseback early in the morning. She rode to the Burgundian Gate with a little band, and ordered it to be opened. The keeper would not obey, saying that the leaders had decided not to give battle that day, and had ordered the gate to be kept closed. When Joan insisted a tumult arose. The people demanded it should be opened, and at last opened it by force. With joyful acclamations the crowd followed their inspired leader to the river. The boats which had been used the day before were lying there, and served this time to carry her across. Joan held her horse by the bridle and let it swim after her, and thus the left bank was reached. A shout of joy from the French who had garrisoned the captured fort welcomed the lily banner. They came out to meet her, and Joan placed herself at their head. "Forward, my brave ones," she cried. "The victory to-day also will be ours." An enthusiastic shout was the reply as they impetuously rushed on to assault Fort Tournelles.

This fort, the strongest bulwark of the English, was close to the river, a drawbridge furnishing the only approach to it. On the land side it was surrounded by a high wall, which had to be passed before reaching the fort itself. Its garrison was the very flower of the English warriors, led by the experienced Glasdale. An assault by a mere handful of troops without ordnance or storming appliances seemed to the English the height of madness.

In the meantime the number of the assailants continually increased, for when the leaders in Orleans witnessed the courageous dash of the Maiden they realized that they must support her. One after another La Hire, Dunois the Bastard of Orleans, De Retz, Gaucourt, Gamache, Graville, Tintey, Villars, Chailly, Couraze, D'Illiers, Thermes, Gontaut, Eulant, Saintrailles, and others appeared upon the scene. By ten o'clock the assault was general. The French hurled long spears. The English brandished leaden maces and iron battle-axes and hurled beams, stones, boiling oil, and molten lead upon the heads of the assailants. After three hours of furious fighting the French fell back.

"Courage," cried Joan, whose banner was always in the front. "Courage in God's name. The victory is ours." She rushed to a ladder and ascended. "Surrender!" she shouted to the English, "or you will be massacred." The reply was an arrow, which pierced her shoulder so that it protruded five inches out of her back. She gave a cry of pain and came down to the trenches. The English rushed upon her furiously, but a hand was stretched out to her at once. A heavy battle-axe struck her protector down. It was the brave Gamache who had come to her rescue. In a trice other heroes were on the spot, and the English fell back. They bore the maiden tenderly away and took off her armor. She looked up with tearful eyes, but they were fixed upon heaven, as was her wont.

"How is it going, Count Dunois?" she asked.

"We have ordered a retreat," he replied, whereupon she partly sprang up, seized the arrow with both hands, and pulled it out. "Let there be no retreating," she urged. "Quick, my armor." In a few minutes she mounted her steed and galloped through the flying ranks. "Halt!" she pleaded. "Have courage, in God's name. In half an hour the English will be in our hands."

The effect of her heroic resolution was wonderful. The soldiers turned back with cheers. Daulon grasped the lily banner and carried it to the wall. Joan hastened forward and again led the assault. The terror of the English at the reappearance of the Maiden cannot be described. They had believed her dead. They were certain now that she was in league with Satan. They dropped their weapons and fled, and fear lent wings to their flight. Loud cries of horror from the water side completed the disasters of the day. An attack had been made upon the drawbridge. Glasdale had hastened there to protect the weak point. A shot fired by Daulon shattered the pier, and the bridge with all its defenders fell with a crash into the Loire. Glasdale, weighed down by his heavy armor, was drowned. It was this disaster which had caused the outcries. The day ended in a tragedy for the English. "Save yourselves as you can," was the signal for flight. The fort was taken.

In Orleans the bells rang welcome to the troops. They rang the whole night long in celebration of the victory. The churches were thronged, and from thousands of grateful hearts rose

the *Te Deum laudamus* to heaven. The next morning dense smoke ascended from the English camp. Suffolk and Talbot had abandoned the siege, set fire to their camp, and retreated with the remnant of their army.

Thus in nine days Joan accomplished the first part of her mission.

V — The Coronation and the Capture

On the left bank of the Loire, a few miles above Orleans, is the little city of Jargeau. At the time of which we write it was surrounded by massive walls, and was considered a strong fortress. After the raising of the siege of Orleans the weakness of their position was so apparent that the Duke of Suffolk, with his brothers, Alexander and John de la Pole, fell back to Jargeau. Within a few weeks the Maid of Orleans, as Joan was now generally called, was before its walls with her principal commanders. Her only desire now was to conduct the King to Rheims for his coronation. Notwithstanding her wounds were not yet healed, she left Orleans with La Hire, Dunois, the Duc d'Alençon, and other officers, went to Tours, where the Dauphin was then stopping, and requested him to follow her at once to Rheims. He was not disposed, however, to grant her request. His kitchen, cellar, and money-chest were once more replenished, and as life was now very enjoyable, he decided that it would be rash to hazard such an undertaking until

the way was cleared; for notwithstanding the deliverance of Orleans, the enemy was still holding the district. The leaders also declared that it would be in violation of all the rules of war. They must first open the way, and above all, Jargeau must be captured. Joan was obliged to submit to their decision, and join them.

On the 20th of June—the day was Friday—the army arrived before Jargeau. Learning that Falstaff was on his way from Paris with help for Suffolk, no time was wasted. Preparations for the assault were instantly begun, and on Saturday evening a breach had been made in the wall. Early on Sunday morning Joan, in full armor, entered the tent of d'Alençon, he being in chief command.

"Come, noble Duke," she cried, "let us make the attack."

"What," he replied, "to-day? On Sunday?"

"Why not, noble sir? Obedience is the best service to God."

"But, Joan, is the breach passable?"

"Undoubtedly. God has given the enemy into our hands."

"But, in the meantime—"

"There is no meantime, noble sir. What fear you? Have you forgotten that I promised to take you back safe to your wife?"

"Well, let the attack begin."

"Forward, attack!" cried Joan, as she left the tent, waving her banner. The troops advanced, but the apprehensions of the Duke proved to be well founded. The breach was too high. A ladder must be raised. In the meantime, among the daring

ones who had rushed forward, was Jean. “Halt, boy,” shouted La Hire, at the same time pulling him back. “I don’t think your skull is tough enough to resist that fellow’s club.” He pointed to the breach. Jean looked up and saw a giant standing in the opening, wielding a massive club, and laughing with fiendish glee as he dashed everything about him to pieces. “Wait a bit,” said La Hire. “I think your namesake, the gunner, can stop that fellow’s laughing.” He was right. The catapult hurled a rock through the air, the giant flung up his arms, and fell backward from the wall, a great shout accompanying his fall.

Joan rushed up the ladder shouting “Forward, forward, my brave ones,” but a stone felled her to the earth.

“Hurrah!” shouted the English, “the witch is dead.” Their joy was short-lived, however. Fear again seized them, as they not only heard her assuring words to those about her, but saw her prepare to ascend the ladder again.

“All right now, boy,” said La Hire, as Jean again rushed forward. “I am with you this time.” They quickly climbed the ladder, but when Jean reached the top some of the English had been thrown down, and others were flying into the city. Among those who had been hurled down was Alexander de la Pole. When the Duke of Suffolk saw his brother fallen, and the French pouring in, he gave up the fight, and, like the others, turned toward the city.

“Halt! halt! surrender!” a strong voice shouted. Suffolk stopped and looked at his pursuer. He could have vanquished

him with little effort, but he did not consider it chivalrous to take advantage of an enemy. “Who are you?” he asked.

“Jean Renault,” was the answer.

“Nobleman?”

“Yes.”

“Knight?”

“No.”

“Kneel down.”

Jean obeyed. The Duke raised his sword, and with the words, “In the name of God and Saint George I dub thee knight,” he dealt him three blows upon the shoulder with the flat of the blade, and then offered him his sword.

Jean arose, pressed the Duke’s hand to his lips, and took his sword, saying, “I do not deserve this honor, my Lord Duke, but I am very proud to receive the sword of the first of England’s heroes.”

“You are right,” said a deep voice behind him; and, as if in benediction, La Hire laid his mailed hand upon his head. “You are right, say I. All the knighthood of France would begrudge you this sword. By Saint George, I am just as happy as if I had seen that sword in the hand of my own son.”

“The noble La Hire’s word,” said the Duke, “is sufficient warrant that my sword will be worthily carried, Sir Jean Renault; there is no stain upon it, guard its purity.” Jean’s feelings overcame him, and he could make no reply.

After the capture of Jargeau, Joan rested for a time, meanwhile forwarding reinforcements to Orleans, for more victories must yet be achieved in the district of the Loire. While her fame attracted recruits every day to her banner, the fear of her very name was so overpowering that Meung, Beaugency, Guetin, and other cities surrendered without offering resistance. The English force which came from Paris under Talbot and Falstaff was defeated at Patay, and two of its generals were taken prisoners. The evacuation of Paris was the result of this battle.*

Joan returned with the Duc d'Alençon to Orleans, and thence repaired to Gien to see the Dauphin. "Sire," she said, "the district of the Loire is now clear. Go with me to your coronation at Rheims."

The Dauphin still hesitated. "The way is even yet dangerous," he said. "Many castles and cities in Champagne are still in the hands of the enemy. How easy it would be for them to fall upon our rear from Normandy." His councillors in attendance decided that his fears were well grounded.

"Oh, you saints of heaven," cried the Maiden, her eyes shining with enthusiasm, "help me to inspire the noble Dauphin with a little of that courage you have given me!" Her prayer was answered at once. The King was moved by her soulful eyes,

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*It was after the victory at Patay that Joan of Arc declared that the English power in France would not recover from the blow in a thousand years.

her steadfast faith, and her lofty inspiration. “Yes, Joan, we will trust you,” he exclaimed. “On to Rheims.”

Orders were sent in all directions. The leaders and their troops quickly assembled, and the march began. Joan led the vanguard. At the mere announcement of her coming the cities of Auxerre, St. Florentin, Chalons, and Sept-Sceaux capitulated. Troyes did not surrender until preparations for assault were made. At Sept-Sceaux, four leagues from Rheims, they rested. Charles then sent three of his principal councillors to San Remy to fetch the holy oil which was kept there.* They returned, escorted by a grand procession headed by the Abbot of San Remy, who walked under a canopy, carrying the phial.

From all the towers of Rheims the bells announced the memorable ceremony of July 17, 1429, which completed Joan’s mission. The pealing organ and a majestic hymn of praise welcomed the long coronation procession as it entered the Cathedral of St. Denis. Joan accompanied the King to the vestibule, where the Archbishop of Rheims met him and conducted him to the high altar. The choir was occupied on each side by the commanders and leading dignitaries, knights and lords, squires and attendants, while a vast multitude of people crowded the cathedral to its utmost capacity. Joan stood next to the King, her eyes shining with sacred joy, holding

*Tradition says that Clovis and all his successors for nine centuries were anointed with this oil.

her banner in her left hand and her sword in her right.* It was a position which ordinarily only the first marshals of the kingdom were entitled to occupy; but no one questioned her right to it or envied her.

The sacred function began at nine o'clock in the morning and lasted until two o'clock in the afternoon. The opening ceremony was the administering of the oath by the Archbishop, during which Joan, following the old custom, held her sword over the King's head. Then followed the knighting, for Charles had not yet received this honor, without which he could not ascend the throne. He knelt and the Duc d'Alençon knighted him. The third ceremony was the consecration and anointing with the holy oil, and was performed by the Archbishop. The last act was his coronation by the same prelate. As soon as the royal symbol glittered upon his head the cathedral resounded with the enthusiastic acclamations of the great multitude: "Hail, hail, King Charles the Seventh!" accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets, the roll of drums, and majestic chorales.

Joan was the first to proclaim allegiance to the Crown. She threw herself at the King's feet, and after kissing his knee, said: "Sire, the will of God is accomplished. You are now the true King of France. My mission is ended. Permit me to return to my home and resume the humble life of the shepherdess."

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*Joan's enemies subsequently reproached her for this, saying it was pride that moved her to take her banner to the ceremony. She only replied that it had shared the pain; it was right it should share the honor.

The last act in the ceremony was Charles's coronation.

"No, Joan," replied the King, "I cannot spare you. All that I now am is due to you. You must accompany me on the return."

Joan rose sadly. She felt that in remaining longer she would be disobeying the divine voices which had commissioned her to perform only the two tasks now successfully accomplished. The King rewarded her by granting a patent of nobility to her whole family, whence it is that she is called "Jeanne d'Arc." Her coat of arms was a blue shield with two gold lilies and a silver sword bearing a golden crown on its point. These distinctions, however, were of little interest to Joan. She grew sadder and sadder, and ardently longed for her home fields and her loved Fairy Tree. This feeling became all the more intense when her brother Pierre arrived; but she rushed joyously into his arms and was somewhat consoled when the King appointed him her page, and she knew that he would never leave her. She took part in many more military operations; but although she entered many cities whose gates opened at the sound of her name, though she was everywhere greeted as a saint and welcomed with enthusiastic acclamations and songs of praise, she no longer felt the early unquestioning faith and the sacred inspiration. An ill-starred movement against Paris, in which she was wounded afresh, confirmed her in the belief that she had exceeded her duty, and that she was no longer under the protection of her saints. She was haunted with gloomy presentiments of death. They pursued her in dreams, and at last she again implored the King to let her go.

"What do you fear, Joan?" said the King. "If you are wounded it shall be my care to heal you. If you are captured by the English I will release you, if it costs half my kingdom. You are the guardian angel of France. I cannot let you go." He placed her in command of his own corps and sent her once more into the tumult of battle.

On the 27th of May Joan appeared with her army before Compiègne,* which was occupied by the French but was closely invested by the Duke of Burgundy, who was in alliance with the English. She successfully entered the city, and of course was received with the greatest enthusiasm. Early on the next day she made a sally at the head of six hundred troopers. She wore her usual armor, with a short silver-gilt cape over it, and carried her small battle-axe, sword, and banner.

Philip of Burgundy's army was composed of experienced troops, and its various divisions were led by Noyelles, John of Luxemburg, and John of Montgomery. Joan swept among them like a whirlwind, carrying everything before her, and for the time throwing them into utter confusion. A cry of terror —"The Maiden, the Maiden"—was raised in the camp, but when Philip of Burgundy appeared with reinforcements the English, recovering from their first surprise and confusion, began to hold their ground. Finding herself confronted by a

*Compiègne, a town in the department of Oise, forty-five miles northeast of Paris, and famous as a royal residence. Its palace was rebuilt by Louis XV., and fitted up sumptuously by Napoleon I.

tenfold increased force, she ordered a retreat. She was the last in the line, and was closely pressed by the enemy, but when the boldest of them came too close she turned upon them and drove them back. In this manner she forced her way successfully to the gate. As there was much crowding and disorder there, she turned once more at the head of her rear guard against her pursuers, and beat them back, thus gaining time for her troopers to get into the city; but when she herself made a dash for the gate she found an English troop barring the way. She slashed right and left and hewed her way through; but, alas! the gate was shut. No one heard her call, no one opened the gate, for it was feared that the English might rush through. Joan turned her horse, hoping to reach open country or find another gate. The enemy, seeing that she rode alone, plucked up courage. She was quickly surrounded, and a desperate fight ensued. An archer stole under her horse, seized her by her velvet cape, and pulled her down. She gathered all her strength for a last effort, but, overcome by superior numbers, sank exhausted upon her knee, and still fought on with her little remaining strength. Longingly she watched the city, but no one came to her rescue. At last she surrendered her sword to Lionel, one of the leaders in the Duke of Luxemburg's corps.

"The Maiden is captured," shouted the soldiers. The news flew from place to place and from troop to troop. The English celebrated the event with as much enthusiasm as if they

had won a pitched battle. Well might they rejoice, for Joan's prowess had cost them two-thirds of their French possessions.

The Duke of Bedford, the Earl of Warwick, and the Bishop of Winchester instructed Brother Martin, Vicar General of the Inquisition, to demand the delivery of "the witch" into the hands of the Church. Martin wrote to the Duke of Burgundy as follows:—

"Both of us know," said the Duke of Burgundy to John of Luxemburg, "that Joan is not a witch but a noble maiden, and that we are bound to deliver all noble prisoners to our English allies for a consideration of ten thousand pounds. But we also know that the Maiden is an exception, as it is altogether probable that Charles VII will ransom her, for he has promised to do so." John of Luxemburg was satisfied, as he hoped to get more from the King than from the English. In the meantime he sent Joan to his castle Beaurevoir, where she was affectionately greeted by his wife.

Month after month passed, but nothing was heard from Charles VII. In the luxurious life he was leading he had not time to think of his rescuer, whom he had promised to ransom even if it cost him half his kingdom. For this reason the English were anxious to expedite matters. They instructed Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, in whose diocese Joan had been captured, to request her delivery to him and to conduct her examination. They offered ten thousand pounds to the Duke of Luxemburg, the ransom price of a general, and an annuity

of three hundred pounds to Duke Lionel. In the middle of September the Duke of Luxemburg sent word to his wife he could wait no longer, but by her earnest pleading and by her excuse that the Duke of Bedford had not yet sent the money, she secured a further respite for Joan.

Joan burst into tears as she now for the first time realized the actual character of the situation. “Oh, I knew it would be so!” she exclaimed. “They have sold me, but I would rather die than be given into the hands of the English.”

One stormy November evening the castle guards heard a scream which was audible even above the howling of the gale. They rushed to the spot and found Joan in the moat. She had thrown herself from her window, but she had failed in her purpose. She was not dead. The event made the avaricious master of the castle fearful that he might lose his reward entirely, for how could he give security that this desperate maiden, in spite of the utmost watchfulness, might not carry out her purpose yet?

A few weeks later the rabble of Rouen stood before an iron cage suspended from a tower. Derisive epithets and cruel insults passed from lip to lip and were greeted with indecent laughter. In a corner of the cage sat a cowering figure bound with fetters. Her face could not be seen, for her head was bowed in anguish. One of the mob thrust his lance toward her to make her look up. He was successful. She slowly raised her head, and the crowd looked upon eyes full of sorrow, eyes full of

purity and beauty,—the eyes of Joan. The Duke of Luxemburg had completed his infamous bargain. He had delivered her to the English.

VI — The Martyrdom

Jean Renault sat in a tavern at Chinon, abstractedly gazing out over the flowery fields which were visible from his windows. It was a day in May, 1431, and the time and the scene painfully reminded him this was the third spring since the incidents in the forest and the Ursuline church. He was not a dreamer, however, but a man of quick and resolute action. It was the thought that he had been prevented from accomplishing the purpose upon which his heart was set that made him gloomy and abstracted. A heavy step interrupted his reverie.

"Ha! the villain," exclaimed La Hire, as he entered, almost beside himself with rage. "The sordid, venal wretch! The dishonorable scoundrel, who would sell that noble one for contemptible gold! But just let him wait! I am searching for him and I am on his track!"

"Noble sir," interrupted Jean, "of whom speak you?"

"Of whom am I speaking? Of whom else than Luxemburg? That—"

"Ah! of him! I too was thinking of him."

"I can well believe it, my boy," for although Jean was now a knight, La Hire continued to call him "my boy." "I cannot sleep because of it. Shame and disgrace upon him."

"I wish we had been at Compiègne. Then we should have had a chance to meet him."

"Yes, yes, to meet him—but the poor Maiden!"

"Yes, the poor Maiden! I was also thinking of her."

"She languishes in a gloomy prison."

"Yes, in a gloomy prison."

"Her delicate limbs are loaded with fetters."

"Yes, loaded with fetters!"

"Condemned to bread and water, like a felon."

"Condemned to bread and water!"

"She, the rescuer of France!"

"Of whom speak you, noble sir?"

"Of whom do I speak? Saint George, of whom else than Joan?"

"Of Joan? I thought it was of—"

"Ah, you were thinking of Marie! The poor child! May God's vengeance overtake Luxemburg!"

"And what about Joan?"

"Do you not know? Why, of course you do not, for I have not told you. He has given her up, sold her to the English, the villain!"

"Who has?" cried the astonished Jean.

"The Duke of Luxemburg."

"God help her! And the King?"

"Pah! the King! He doesn't care."

"Oh, the shame!"

"Oh, the disgrace!"

"But by what legal authority have they put Joan in prison?"

"By what legal authority? Ask the priests who have condemned her."

"The priests!"

"The vengeful English have given her to the Holy Inquisition. The Bishop of Beauvais conducted the proceedings, and she has been sentenced to life imprisonment for heresy."

"To life imprisonment! But how could they convict her of heresy?"

"They did not convict her. That simple child refuted every charge made against her by her sensible and devout replies to the questions they asked her. They condemned her upon the charge of having intercourse with evil spirits."

"Shameful, it is shameful!" cried Jean, springing up in a rage.

"Yes, horrible!"

"Farewell, noble sir."

"What? Whither go you?"

"To Rouen. You must let me go. I shall not ask the King."

"But what will you do in Rouen?"

"Summon help if it be possible. Rescue Joan even if it should cost my life."

"Would that I could go with you! But I could be of no service. You will not accomplish your purpose, my boy. They have not only selected a special tower for her prison, but they have securely bound her with chains fastened to a post that cannot be reached by you. And there are two guards constantly on the watch outside and three inside the prison."

"But even that, noble sir, does not discourage me. It only makes me the more eager to be off; and there is something else that urges me on to Rouen."

"Well, God go with you, my boy. But I warn you to be careful. I wish I could go also. I would ask you to wait until I can be there, but it would not be right. You have waited too long already."

On the next day Jean rode to Rouen in the disguise of a peasant. While going through the recovered districts he rode as fast as the strength of his horse would permit, following the same circuitous route which he took on his first journey. On the last stretch he made a still wider detour, which brought him into his own neighborhood, where he met peasants of his acquaintance, as he had expected. He left his horse with them and pursued his way on foot to Rouen. That city, as well as its vicinity, was in the hands of the enemy, and was so strongly garrisoned that little but English was heard on the streets, —a fact which caused Jean much misgiving. His appearance, however, did not excite attention, for intercourse between city

and country had gradually been restored, and the peasants were freely bringing in their products for the market.

Jean's first move was to the church of Saint Ursula. There, at the place by the wall which was so familiar to him, he fell upon his knees, but he could not pray. He could hear his heart beating as he listened; but when he found that he was listening in vain and that there was no sign of life on the other side of the wall, he became more composed, and prayed fervently to Heaven for help. Upon his return to his lodgings he passed himself off for one of the curious crowd which was pouring in from near and far to see "the witch."

"You have come here to little purpose, good friend," said his host, "and yet there are some sights which will repay you. You can see the cage in which the prisoner was fastened, and the tower in which she is still confined."

"Is no one allowed to enter the tower? I would be satisfied if I could see her even from a distance."

"Why, what are you thinking of? No one should be allowed to see her, for she has intercourse with evil spirits! How easy it would be for one of those spirits to assume the appearance of a peasant and join a crowd of curious people, just as if it were one of them! Now the prison door opens! Hush! the spirit gets in there! and ps-t—they are gone. Do you see? That is the way with witches."

"Is that so?"

"Oh, yes! My grandmother, blessed—"

At this instant the loquacious host was called out. When he returned he had forgotten his story in his eagerness to make an announcement to his guest.

"You are a very lucky man," he said, beaming with delight.

"How so?" replied Jean.

"Why, look you! I thought I was too when I heard the news. I am perfectly delighted that you did not lodge with that pitiful fellow, Loup. Between ourselves, I can't endure that man. He has recently—but I will tell you about that another time. What was I saying? Oh, yes! Look, there comes my cousin, the dear, good woman! You cannot imagine how pious she is. His reverence, the Bishop, could tell you. Why, he has even taken her confessions many a time himself!"

"Yes, but what does all this mean?"

"Why, it means good news. I have stolen away to tell you, for it is still a secret, and my cousin has promised his reverence not to breathe a word of it to any one, and she first told Charlotte—"

"But what is this secret?"

"Well, what do you think? The witch has actually had intercourse with evil spirits in the prison!"

"Ah! How do you know that?"

"How? My cousin could tell you exactly. Let me see, how was it? Oh, yes; I have it. The witch had promised to renounce all her hellish practices and wear women's clothes. So they were brought into the prison; but notwithstanding that she was

found the next morning with men's clothes on again. There you have it."

"But why do you conclude from that that she has intercourse with evil spirits?"

"Why? Do you still doubt? Holy Ursula! his reverence says so. My cousin, the good woman, she could tell you all about it; but she has gone just now to mass."

"But you were going to tell me some good news."

"Oh, yes; I had nearly forgotten it. It is this. As the witch has resumed her intercourse with the evil spirits, she will have to be tried again."

"Well, of what interest is that to me?"

"Of what interest is it to you? Holy Ursula! Is it not of the greatest interest to you that you have not come here in vain? When they sentence the witch again, she will stand upon a high platform, as she did the first time, and you will see her just as easily as you see me now."

"So! That is nice. But when will it be?"

"I do not know, little friend. But, ps-t, my cousin will find out all about it from his reverence."

"Is the Bishop here?"

"Not yet; but if he does not come to-day, he will be here in the morning."

"Well, surely, I arrived here at just the right time."

"Did I not tell you so? I am so glad you are not stopping with that disagreeable Loup, for he could not have told you a word about this matter."

"Of course not. He has not such a pious cousin who confesses to his reverence himself. But can I go now and see the tower and the cage?"

"Certainly, little friend; but listen. If you should meet that Loup, do not greet him, do not even look at him, for they say he has an evil eye—he might bewitch you."

"I will keep it in mind."

To his great disappointment Jean found the tower so well guarded that he could not be of the slightest assistance to Joan. He decided to withdraw and await events before forming any plans, and in the meantime make inquiries about Marie. While on his way back he heard from passers-by that the Bishop was momentarily expected, and that he would pass that way. As he did not wish unnecessarily to expose himself to the prelate's gaze, he entered the Ursuline church. It was empty. He went to the usual spot, and scarcely had he placed his ear to the wall before he clearly heard a sob, which seemed to come through the stone. Trembling with excitement, he listened all the more intently, but in vain. All was silent. Had he or had he not been deceived? All at once it seemed to him as if it were the voice of the girl in the carriage which he met in the forest, and that she could be no other than Marie of Chafleur. He quickly made his plans. As he stood leaning

against a door, near which he had been kneeling apparently engaged in devotion, he pressed a piece of wax against the lock, went at once to a locksmith's in an out of the way street, and said his master wished a key made from the impression.

The next evening, when all Rouen was out to see the young King Henry of England make his entrance, Jean again found the church empty. He tried his key and it opened the door. He emerged into a long, dark passage-way which skirted the wall. If he was right in his calculations, he would find the prison between this passage and the church. He felt along the wall, for he could see nothing. He was right. There was a door near the corner. It must lead to the prison out of which had come the sound of sobbing. With trembling hand he took another impression, groped his way back, closed the door in the church wall, and departed. The next day he obtained the second key. He now forsook the church for a time and devoted his attention exclusively to the fate of Joan. The strangest reports were circulated about her; but they were so incredible and withal so dreadful, that he paid little attention to them. What pained him the most was the certainty that he could do nothing to help her.

Thus matters stood on that 30th of May of the memorable year 1431. The sun gayly shone that morning, and the birds sang joyously in the trees and among the flowers. The doors of Rouen stood wide open. From far and near the multitude gathered. There was a sea of heads on the sides of the great

market-place, and in the streets leading to it, and windows and roof-tops were crowded. In the middle of the square were three high platforms. Two of them, which faced each other, were evidently set apart for those directly concerned in the proceedings. The general interest centred, however, in the third platform, of the use of which there could be no doubt. The flooring rested upon a pile of wood so arranged that the logs made steps, and from the centre of the platform rose a stake to a man's height. The base of the pile was surrounded with bundles of fagots smeared with resin and pitch.

"Come on, little friend," said the innkeeper to Jean, as he went up some stairs. "I have a nice place for seeing. I am so glad you did not stop with that miserable Loup—but, holy Ursula! are you ill? Your hand is as cold as ice."

"I am not feeling very well," replied Jean, "and I would rather go back again."

"What! You don't mean to leave just as the spectacle begins! I will get a little potion for you which my cousin, the good woman—but, holy Ursula! the drums are already rattling. The judges are mounting the great tribunal. Look, there is his reverence. He has the parchment in his hand which contains the sentence. Pay attention. He will read it soon."

Jean did not hear a word. His eyes were fixed upon a distant spot whence, accompanied by the roll of drums and the shouts of the multitude, a procession was slowly making its way through the crowd.

"Do you see the cart?" said the innkeeper. "Do you see the witch in it? She is sitting by the side of Father Martin. That holy man has been praying by her side all night that the evil spirit may forsake her. Holy Ursula! See how they have bound her! Her hands are fastened, and her feet are in iron rings with a chain between."

The cart soon reached the square. Joan was led up to the second platform by Father Martin. The Bishop of Beauvais read the sentence amid the profound silence of the multitude:

"In the name of God, Amen.

"We, the Bishop of Beauvais, Master and Vicar of the Inquisition, pronounce sentence. As Joan, commonly called 'the Maiden,' has relapsed into heresy and apostasy, she is excommunicated, and herewith given over to the secular power for the infliction of the punishment provided for the heretic."

Some would have applauded, but they found no encouragement, for Joan had fallen upon her knees and was praying, and when she raised her head her face was as the face of an angel. Many began to realize that she was not a criminal, and loud sobs, indicating the growing change of feeling, were heard here and there. Observing this, the judges hastened their work. An attendant approached her and placed a pointed cap on her head with the words, "Heretic, relapser, apostate, idolatress," written upon it. He then hurried her down the steps and led her to the pile, at the foot of which the executioner was in waiting.

"Leave me not, Father Martin," she implored, as the executioner seized her and dragged her up to the platform. The father followed and remained with her as the executioner bound her to the stake and then turned to descend.

"Pray for me, all pray for me," she cried to the people.

The executioner seized a torch and lit the fagots at the foot of the pile. Swiftly rose the flames.

"For God's sake, my father," cried Joan, "take care! Quick, quick, hurry down, but hold the crucifix high before me until I die."

Martin did as she requested. The Bishop of Beauvais approached.

"Bishop, Bishop," said Joan, reproachfully, "you are the cause of my death," and then as she felt the heat, she exclaimed, "O Rouen, I fear you will have to suffer for my death."

The flames mounted higher. A dense cloud of smoke concealed her, but now and then the wind swept it aside, and the people saw, not a devil's witch, but a praying angel with marvellously beautiful eyes fixed upon heaven. Suddenly the flames seized her garments. Her last word was "Jesus"—then a piercing death cry, and all was ended.

Thus perished the Maid of Orleans, rescuer of France. She died forgotten and forsaken by him for whom she had done all, betrayed through the greed of her own countrymen, accused from motives of revenge by her enemies. She died the most cruel of deaths, and yet was as guileless and pure as

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when she sat under the Fairy Tree tending her lambs. Joan is a unique figure in the world's history. A simple peasant maiden, who could neither read nor write, and knew only the Lord's Prayer, the Credo, and the Ave Maria, she achieved such extraordinary results by her gift of inspiration that her contemporaries and posterity in their efforts to explain them have had to attribute so much of the miraculous to her deeds that some have doubted her very existence.

The old market-place of Rouen now presented another spectacle. "Alas! alas! we have burned a saint," many said. The crowd remained a long time, as if riveted to the spot, staring at the fire as it consumed the last vestiges of the victim.

The innkeeper himself was so overcome that he forgot all about his companion. When he turned to speak to him, Jean was gone.

VII — The Rescue

Marie of Chafleur had borne her imprisonment with unshaken courage. She was resolved that she would not be forced to take the vow, and though she suffered greatly in her damp, gloomy prison,—she who could still take childish delight in every little flower,—she remained true to her resolution.

The Abbess, who had been so favorably impressed by her when they first met, was still more impressed by her firmness, and gave her permission to visit her. Upon one such occasion the abbess kindly said: “You grieve me, my daughter. Your obstinacy may compel me to adopt severe measures.”

Marie made no reply. She was looking out of the open window at the garden, which was now in full bloom, and was so absorbed with the view that she did not hear the Abbess. Her face was all aglow with excitement, her eyes sparkled, and she gleefully clapped her hands. “Oh, how beautiful, how beautiful!” she cried, approaching nearer to the window. “Oh, if I could but be among those flowers!”

"You are childish," said the Abbess, without manifesting displeasure, however. "Listen, and pay attention to what I say."

Marie wiped away her rising tears and looked into the Abbess's face. "It is not very long ago that you were as young as I," she said, "and, oh, how beautiful you must have been without that veil! Tell me, have you never enjoyed yourself in the flowery meadows? Have you never chased the pretty butterflies, never listened to the songs of the birds, never breathed the fragrance of the flowers? Oh, tell me."

"Why do you call up such recollections, child?"

"Oh, yes, I know you have, and so you can understand me when I tell you it is impossible for me to stay within these walls. I must go. Surely, noble lady, you will not keep me here any longer. Oh, open the doors and let me out. I will go on foot and travel through the country all alone until I find my uncle. And even should I not find him, and have to suffer hunger, thirst, cold, and heat, still I should be happy. So once more, noble lady, I implore you to let me go."

"Child, child, you are asking impossibilities of me."

"Why impossible?"

"You have no idea of the implicit obedience required of us."

"But, noble lady, your vows and your discipline only bind you in your relations to the convent life, not to the outer world."

"You are mistaken, my daughter. We owe unquestioning obedience in all things to our superiors. Whatever they demand of us is right. It is not for us to question or decide."

"How is that, noble lady? Having dedicated yourself to Heaven, can you blindly follow human dictation?"

"Child, the will of the Church, to which we bow, is the will of Heaven."

"I do not understand that."

"That is because you are not in the right spirit to understand it."

"That may be true, but I am sure of one thing."

"What is that?"

"That you would not poison me even if you were ordered to do so."

"Child," said the astonished Abbess, "what put such a dreadful thought as that in your mind?"

"Because, though unconsciously, you have really begun to do it."

"You shock me! What do you mean? That I would poison—"

"The poison of the prison atmosphere, noble lady, is just as surely killing me as if it were real poison. So again I implore you to let me go. Do not degrade yourself by becoming a party to the shameful conspiracy which has been planned against me."

The Abbess might have replied to Marie at more length, but she was too thoroughly convinced of the truth of her words and the injustice which had been practised toward her to do so; and besides this, Marie's sweetness of nature and childish ways won more and more not only her sympathy but her affection.

"I cannot give you your freedom, my daughter," she replied, "but I will do all I can for you. You may stay in the garden during the day, but when the Bishop is here you will have to go back to the prison. Perhaps mildness may accomplish more than severity. It is because of this hope, bear in mind, that I make this concession. Now go. Here is the key to the garden."

Marie fervently kissed her hand and ran off. The Abbess went to the window and thoughtfully watched her. The joyful expression of her face showed that her heart approved what her reason and sense of duty half condemned.

Marie's life now grew more cheerful, for the Abbess kept her word. She not only allowed her to go daily to the garden, but she admitted her to her confidence. Of course she had not the slightest idea that this would induce her to join the order, but she reasoned that if their relations became intimate she would not suspect any such purpose.

John of Luxemburg all this time was administering affairs as if he were the lawful owner of Marie's property, and so far ignored all her rights that after deducting the comparatively small sum due to the Bishop, he put the rest of the receipts into his own pocket without further ceremony. It actually seemed as if the two men little by little might yet accomplish their purpose. Though Marie felt very happy when she first set foot in the convent garden and the Abbess treated her so affectionately, yet the roses on her cheeks began to fade, and when she was alone in her narrow prison during the

Bishop's visits her sorrowful sighs showed she was not in her usual cheerful spirits. Even in the garden her joyousness would vanish whenever she came near the high wall which surrounded it. The consciousness that she was a prisoner embittered every joy, and at last even made the garden unenjoyable. In this sad frame of mind the scenes of her childhood seemed to her like bright spots in a lost paradise. As she recalled the happiness of that paradise, the more keenly she realized the injustice which had driven her out of it. During that day when all Rouen was witnessing the awful spectacle in the old market-place, she sat more sorrowful than usual in her prison. Of course she did not know what was going on, for no news from the outer world ever found its way within the convent walls. Whatever the cause may have been, whether her confinement this time had been longer than usual, or whether she had painted the lost happiness of her childhood in too lively colors, she was more unhappy than usual.

"My God! My God!" she moaned, "hast Thou utterly forsaken me? What crime have I committed that calls for such a frightful expiation? If I am guiltless why should godless men triumph? And you, my uncle! Is it because you are dead that your help is so long delayed? Oh! you brave one, who all alone confronted those robbers in the forest! Why wait you so long? Have you been mistaken? Am I not the one for whom you dared so much? Oh, be quiet, foolish heart, lest I persuade myself I really am that one."

She gradually regained her composure, smiled through her tears, and lost herself in fancies of another kind. At last, scared by her own thoughts, she resumed: “O thou Blessed Virgin, protect him! Keep him far away from here. Those against whom he would contend single-handed are too strong for him. Protect him.”

As she spoke the last words there was a slight noise at the door. “They are coming to let me out,” she said to herself; “the Bishop has gone.” She wiped away her tears and stepped forward. The door opened, but it was a man’s figure that she saw in the dim light, not the sister keeper.

“Is it you, Marie of Chafleur?” the stranger whispered, for he could see nothing in the prison.

“My God! what is it? Who are you?” said the terrified girl in a low voice.

“Be quiet,” whispered the stranger. “If you are Marie of Chafleur, take this bundle. It contains a page’s dress. Hasten! I will watch outside.”

The poor girl trembled like an aspen leaf, but she took the bundle. She stood for a few seconds as if dazed, but quickly made her decision and stepped back into the prison. It was some time before she could make the change of costume, for her trembling hands were not as deft as usual, but at last she went out into the passage in her disguise.

“Give me all your clothes,” whispered the stranger, “for if they are left here they will betray you.”

Marie fetched them to him, and after making a bundle of them exactly like the one he had brought, he took the trembling girl by the hand and led her to the church door. Then he listened. All was still. “Softly, softly,” he murmured as they left the church.

Who can picture Marie’s glad surprise as she looked by daylight into the face of her protector for whose safety she had just before invoked the Virgin? There was little time for sentiment, however, for scarcely had Jean closed the door when they heard voices and steps in the street. He drew Marie down quickly, and they knelt together as if engaged in their devotions, while he listened intently to every sound near the entrance; but the steps they had heard were those of passers-by. Jean whispered, “I believe we have succeeded. Let us thank the Holy Virgin and Saint Ursula.” With tremulous voices they murmured their gratitude, and then Jean said in a low tone: “Do you feel strong enough, noble lady, to go on alone?”

“Oh, I will be as strong as a man when away, far away from here,” she answered.

“I will take the lead,” said Jean. “Follow me at some little distance, so no one shall suspect we are acquainted with each other. The whole city is in commotion and crowded with strangers on account of the execution. They will not pay much attention to us. Do not look around much, lest some one may recognize you. Keep your eyes downcast, and they will think you have been overcome by the dreadful spectacle. In this

way we may pass through the gate like the other strangers on their way home, and after that the Holy Virgin will help us the rest of the way."

Jean arose and left the church, and Marie followed his instructions. Everything turned out as Jean had said. The two met many groups standing on the walks or passing along the streets, and at last safely got through the gate. Marie could scarcely restrain her exultation, but Jean went calmly on, hurrying to the forest as fast as she could follow him. Marie's joy increased as she felt sure that she was rescued, for she could not believe that a trace had been left which would reveal the manner of her escape. She looked around, and finding that no one was following them, she gave expression to her happiness.

"My noble rescuer," she said, "I cannot longer keep silence and conduct myself like a Capuchin. It is inconsistent with my costume, you know. I must exult; I must shout, or I shall die right here before you—"

"Not yet," said Jean, without turning round. "It is not the time for shouting, still less for dying. We are not safe yet, though the most difficult part of our undertaking has been accomplished. Your exultation would be noticed from the city, and then there would be much curiosity among the pages to find out who it was that was so greatly pleased over the horrible spectacle. During the next few days they will move

heaven and earth to catch the fugitive. Then some one will be certain to remember the exulting page of to-day."

Jean's advice made such an impression upon Marie that she restrained herself; but when she found herself within the shelter of the forest and Jean waiting for her, she could no longer keep still. She flew rather than ran over the green carpet. Her feelings overcame her when for the first time she found herself in Nature's majestic temple and felt its subtle and mysterious magic. She fell upon her knees and poured out a very passion of gratitude to Heaven. She thanked the Virgin for the happiness of which she had been so long deprived, for her rescue, and especially for the protection which had been given to her rescuer. Then she turned to Jean, and her tearful eyes betrayed the emotions of her heart.

"I have no words with which to thank you, gallant knight," said she.

"Oh, my noble lady," replied Jean, "if you only knew how happy it has made me to have brought you thus far, you would think me recompensed even too richly. But let us first think of the joy this will bring to the noble La Hire."

"What!" exclaimed Marie, "are you taking me to La Hire?"

"Yes! But let us hurry on, so that we may get out of the English district before the news of your flight is spread abroad."

They went on again, and shortly met the peasants with whom Jean had left his horse. He bought another for Marie, and they rode off together. Once more he safely travelled the

dangerous road, and on the next day they had passed the last city occupied by the English. They met with no difficulties during the rest of the journey, and after changing their costumes at the lodgings in Chinon, Jean took Marie to La Hire's apartment.

La Hire was not aware of their arrival at the inn. He was greatly excited, for he had just heard the news of Joan's death. Aroused to the highest pitch of fury, he had cursed her enemies, then flung himself into a chair, and seriously debated whether he should not break his sword rather than serve such a King longer. He was of too noble a nature, however, to come to such a decision. There were enemies of the fatherland yet to fight, and he had some other duties to accomplish. He had just made his decision, when he heard a well-known voice behind him.

"Here, noble sir, is Marie of Chafleur."

The knight sprang up. Words cannot describe his joy. He stood like a statue, with his eyes fixed upon her.

"What!" he exclaimed at last, "is this charming girl the little Marie, my sister's child?" He opened wide his arms, and she flew to his embrace. He kissed her hair, and lovingly stroked her cheeks.

"My poor child," he gently said, "how you must have suffered!" Marie only answered with a sigh.

"You shall tell me all about it some other time. Be quiet now, my daughter. From now on no one shall harm a hair of

your head. And this Luxemburg! By Saint George, he shall make reparation to me for every tear you have shed."

He resumed his seat, and then turned to Jean.

"Come to my heart, my son. I knew that you were as brave and determined and valiant as any one, but I did not believe you would bring this child back. I am anxious to know how you did it, but just now I am too full under my doublet to listen. I believe there are tears running down my beard. I don't know when that ever happened before. It must be because this is a real heart's joy you have given me, my boy. Yes, yes, you and poor Joan have both shown what resolute purpose can do when it is persisted in to the end. Children," he exclaimed to both of them, "you have made me young again. The end will be fine. Just now I determined to fight the English still longer, and I know," with a look at Jean, "who will be with me. But that is not the end I mean. That is only the common duty. I know a finer end than that." He looked with joyous eyes from Jean to Marie, and from Marie to Jean. "Yes, a finer end than that, and by Saint George I will accomplish it."

The valiant knight did accomplish it. Just two years from that day he stood on the steps of a lordly castle, happier perhaps than he had ever been before in his life, and watched a carriage which was coming toward the castle amid the enthusiastic shouts of the peasants. In this carriage the lawful owner of the castle was making his entrance to take possession, for the English had been driven out of that whole region.

The master of the castle was Jean Renault, and by his side sat his happy spouse, Marie of Chafleur.

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Appendix

It is impossible to compile a chronological statement of all the events in the life of Joan of Arc, as many of the dates are uncertain and some are unknown, but those given below are measurably accurate.

– 1411, Born at Domremy, France.
– 1422, Henry VI. of England proclaimed King of France.
– 1428, The Voices bid Joan to crown the Dauphin and raise the siege of Orleans.
– 1429, Joan goes to the Dauphin and recognizes him as the disguised king; is placed in command of the Army; enters Orleans, April 29, and forces the English to raise the siege, May 8; subsequently captures Jargeau, Beaugency, and other cities, and overwhelmingly defeats the English at Patay; leads the Dauphin to Rheims, and assists at his coronation; is ennobled, Dec. 29.
– 1430, Joan is taken prisoner at Compiègne, May 24.

– 1431, Joan is sold to the English and delivered by them to the Inquisition, Jan. 3; at her first trial is declared guilty of heresy and sorcery and sentenced to imprisonment for life; at her second trial upon charges of "heresy, relapse, apostasy, and idolatry" is sentenced to be burned at the stake; her death, May 30.
– 1456, Sentence revoked by the Pope.
– 1904, Preliminary steps toward canonization of Joan taken at Rome.