

to do amiss, and intend the more busily to virtue and to learning; they should come to the king and declare their assent to his chastisement. According to this curious entry in the Rolls of Parliament,* Warwick applied for these articles as his protection against the young Henry's displeasure and indignation, "as the king is grown in years, in stature of his person, and in conceit and knowledge of his high authority." Severe corporal punishment was the accustomed instrument of good education in the fifteenth century. The scourge was recommended even by gentle mothers to be administered to their sons. One writes to beg that her son's tutor may be implored "that he will truly belash him till he will amend;" adding, "I had rather he were fairly buried than lost for default."† No doubt it was in this spirit of love that Warwick chastised the young king. At this age Henry appears not to have wanted the just sense of his own position which failed him in after life. It is difficult now distinctly to understand what were the deficiencies of his intellect. He probably inherited some portion of the malady of his maternal grandfather; but infirmity of purpose and fear of responsibility seem to have marked his character rather than that unsoundness of mind which exhibits itself in habitual delusions and fitful aberrations. His life was one long state of pupilage. All the wonderful energy of his race appears in him to have been extinguished in a calm indifference to good or evil fortune, and in patient submission to stronger wills than his own—to his uncles, to his preceptor, to his wife, to his wife's favourites. How much of the fire of the Plantagenets might have been trodden out of Henry VI. by the severities of his early discipline cannot now be estimated. He was born to a most unhappy position; and it is satisfactory to believe that his hard lot was solaced by that religious trust which lightens the burthens of the wretched, whether on a throne or in a dungeon. The earl of Warwick, who, like many other leaders of chivalry, was an enthusiastic believer in the efficacy of vows and pilgrimages, may have inspired his pupil with that strong feeling of ceremonial devotion which caused him long to be regarded as a saint. To a right direction of that piety we owe the noble foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge—worthy monuments which still call upon us to respect the memory of the most meek and most unfortunate of kings.

* Quoted in Mr. Sharon Turner's "History of England during the Middle Ages," and edit. vol. ii. p. 492.

† "Paston Letters," letter cvii. Ramsay's edit.

CHAPTER III.

Defeat of the English before Montargis.—Position of Charles VII.—Commencement of the siege of Orleans.—Salisbury killed.—Battle of Herrings.—Despair of the besieged.—Proclamation.—The peasant girl of Domremy.—Joan of Arc travels to the court of Charles VII.—Receives authority to relieve Orleans.—Enters the besieged city.—English belief in witchcraft.—Terrors and defeats of the English.—The siege raised.—Defeats of Jargeau and Patay.—Charles crowned at Rheims.—Joan captured at Compiègne.—Tried as a sorceress and burnt at Rouen.—French war continued.—Henry VI. crowned in Paris.—The English disgraces and losses.—Henry married to Margaret of Anjou.—Affairs in England.—The duchess of Gloucester accused of witchcraft.—Arrest of the duke of Gloucester.—Deaths of Gloucester and Beaufort.

THE war in France had been conducted without any decided success on either side, after the victory at Verneuil in 1424, till 1427, when the forces of the duke of Bedford sustained a severe defeat, and were compelled to raise the siege of Montargis. But the cause of Charles VII. was little advanced by this partial good fortune. His adherents were quarrelling amongst themselves. Many of the nobles who had supported him now deserted a prince whose treasurer declared he had only four crowns in his coffer. Nearly all the fortresses on the right bank of the Loire had been surrendered without defence. The people were enduring famine and disease. Charles, whose character was a little improved by adversity, did not lose hope amidst the evils which surrounded him. He was of an easy nature, and in proportion as his great lords were faithless he addressed himself to the affection of the common people. Gradually a personal as well as a national feeling revived the patriotism which had been almost extinguished. Charles placed his chief reliance upon the possession of Orleans. If that city fell, the provinces beyond the Loire would be open to the English, and he would have to find a shelter in the mountains of Auvergne or the more remote Dauphiné. The English, it was known, were approaching to besiege Orleans. The inhabitants prepared for its defence with unwonted zeal. They received aids of money from other cities; and a tax was voted for the same aid by the three estates assembled at Chinon. The citizens adopted

the most effectual means to resist the besiegers. They destroyed their suburbs, with their vines and gardens and houses, that their enemy might have no lodgment; and they erected strong forts, particularly that of the Tournelles, which, defending the bridge, secured the communication of the city with the left bank of the Loire. On the 12th of September, 1428, the earl of Salisbury pitched his camp to the south of Orleans, and within a week commenced an attack upon the bulwark of the Tournelles. The assault was resisted with more than usual popular enthusiasm. The experienced warriors discharged their arrows and missiles; and the citizens, male and female, showered down stones upon the assailants. But the fort of the Tournelles was finally taken. The inhabitants then raised another bulwark on an isle of the river, and cannonaded the English camp. Dunois and La Hire, the bravest of the French chivalry, arrived with reinforcements. The English lost their best commander, Salisbury. He had mounted the ruined tower of the Tournelles to survey the city, when a stone ball struck him and carried away his eye and a part of his face. He survived eight days. The duke of Suffolk now succeeded to the command; and the siege was pursued with a perseverance as remarkable as the defence. The great extent of Orleans prevented its complete blockade; and supplies were, from time to time, thrown in for the relief of the besieged. Reinforcements, too, continued to arrive. To meet the necessities of the besieging army, the duke of Bedford had despatched an immense convoy with provisions from Paris. It was determined to cut off this supply. The convoy, under the command of Sir John Fastolf, was attacked by a detachment from the garrison of Orleans, and by a body of French and Scots commanded by the count of Clermont. The attack was ill-devised; and was commenced without a proper concert amongst the French leaders. Their force of eight thousand men was defeated by fifteen hundred English. This was called the Battle of Herrings, vast quantities of this lenten food forming part of the supplies. It was fought on the 12th of February, 1429. The line of English forts round the city was gradually extending. Towers and bulwarks were erected on each bank of the Loire by the besiegers. The lines, vigilantly kept, now more effectually prevented the arrival of food or men. Famine was beginning to threaten more misery than the sword. The resolution which still remained to the unhappy people was that of despair. The fame of their gallant resistance had gone through

France; and it was felt, even in districts far removed from the scene of warfare, that the time was approaching when it should be decided whether France should be governed by the English Plantagenets or by its own race of Valois.

The feudal lord of Orleans was in captivity in England; and it was proposed by the people, seeing resistance was unavailing, that their city should be placed in the keeping of the duke of Burgundy, till the great contest for the crown of France was decided. Philip of Burgundy was pleased at the proposal, which was communicated to him by ambassadors from Orleans. The duke of Bedford gave no encouragement to the plan, when it was debated between these allied chiefs at Paris. An adviser of Bedford says,—"We are not here to champ the morsels for Burgundy to swallow." Bedford rejoins, "No, no, we will not beat the bushes for another to take the birds." Bedford and Burgundy quarrelled about the expected prey; and Burgundy withdrew his troops, and left the English to continue the siege alone. The fall of the city was rapidly approaching; when some wonder, not unmixed with contempt, was felt by the leaders of the besieging army, upon receiving a letter dictated in far different terms than those which usually proclaimed the challenges of chivalry: "King of England, and you, duke of Bedford, who call yourself regent of the kingdom of France; you, William de la Pole, count of Suffolk; you, John lord Talbot, and you, Thomas lord Scales, who call yourselves lieutenants of the said duke of Bedford, do ye right to the King of Heaven; render to the Pucelle, who is sent hither by God, the King of Heaven, the keys of the good cities you have taken and plundered in France. And you archers, companions in war, gentlemen and others, who are before the city of Orleans, go your ways into your own country, in the name of God. I am sent by the King of Heaven to drive you out of all France." The English captains would have heard the common rumour that from the borders of Champagne a young woman had travelled to the court of Charles, at Chinon, asserting a divine mission; and that her pretensions had been examined before a solemn council of jurists and theologians at Poitiers. The dauphin must indeed be fallen low to depend upon such aid.

In the hamlet of Domremy, near Vaucouleurs, a pastoral country watered by the Meuse, dwelt a little cultivator named Jacques d'Arc, with his wife Isabel. They had a daughter, Joan, who was remarkable for her early piety. Her talents were considerable;

but she had received no education, and made the mark of a cross at the beginning of the letters which were written at her dictation. She said of herself, "I feared no woman of Rouen in sewing and spinning." When thirteen years of age, she refused to join in the sports of the young people of her hamlet; and secluded herself in the woods and fields, or was found kneeling before the cross in her parish church. This was after the period when the death of Charles VI. had divided France into two great factions; and the vicinity of Domremy to Burgundy had made the feuds of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs familiar to the peasantry. Joan saw the men of her own village violently disputing as to the merits of these parties; but mostly agreed in hatred of the English. She had herself looked upon the extreme misery of the people; and she attributed it, not without justice, to the invasion which had given the crown to an English king at Paris, whilst the true heir was in danger and difficulty. Her enthusiastic nature was stimulated by these united impulses of religion and patriotism; and in her solitary meditations she began to see visions and to hear voices. The first voice which she heard only exhorted her to be pious and discreet; but then came a figure with wings, and commanded her to go to the succour of the king, for that she should recover his kingdom. From time to time she told what she had seen and heard. "My voices have instructed me"—"My voices have commanded me," were her expressions. She seems to have distinctly separated her own supposed revelations from the local superstitions; for there was near her village a wonderful tree, called the Ladies' tree, growing beside a spring with healing properties; and old people said that fairies frequented the place; but she declared that she never saw fairies, and she never went to the tree to make garlands, as others did, from the time she knew she ought to go to the king. Amongst the ridiculous accusations which were afterwards heaped up against her, she was charged with having attended the witches' sabbath on every Thursday night, at the Fairies' oak of Bourlemont. There was an ancient prophecy, known to the country people, that France should be lost by a woman and saved by a woman. The queen Isabella, who had brought in the English, was the one. The people now added to the prophecy that a virgin from the marches of Lorraine should be the other. Before 1429 Joan was entirely persuaded that she had a power given her to restore the kingdom to Charles VII.

The voices which Joan heard disclosed to her the practical mode

of carrying out her strong idea. They told her, what would have been her natural conviction, that she must put herself in communication with some great person. She sought the feudal lord of Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs. He sent her away, as one distraught. She told her story to two gentlemen who dwelt near her. "There is no help for France but in me," she said. "I would rather spin by the side of my poor mother, but I must go. My Lord calls me." Her pretensions were spread abroad. The duke of Lorraine sent for her, to cure him of a malady. She said that she had no heavenly light to remove his disease, and she counselled him to lead a better life than he had been wont to lead. The duke gave her four francs, and bade her depart. At last, the lord of Baudricourt listened to her when she again came before him in her shabby red gown. The people of Vaucouleurs provided her the equipment of a horse and a man's dress; and she went forth on a perilous journey, having received the oaths of John de Novelompont and Bertrand de Poulengi, who had first seriously listened to her pretensions, that they would conduct her safely to the king. They travelled through a wild country in the winter season, taking the most unfrequented routes, and using every care to avoid the Burgundians and the English. She forwarded a letter, which she dictated, to Charles, and at length received permission to proceed to Chinon. Here she arrived after eleven days' travel. Her fame had gone before her. At last she overcame the difficulties of approaching the king. From that moment, when she publicly announced her mission at the court of Charles, many things which she most probably did through her own shrewd sense were accounted miraculous. Thus she is recorded to have selected the prince out of a crowd of attendants; and to have indicated to him an acquaintance with facts only known to himself. It is difficult not to believe that at this stage she had become an instrument in the hands of some persons about the king. Every ostensible precaution, however, appears to have been taken to prevent his cause being committed to an impostor. Her honest life was fully proved; and in the conviction of her sanctity learned doctors, prudent counsellors, and bold warriors, agreed that the Maid should be confided in. A suit of armour was prepared for her; and she indicated where a sword could be found, behind the altar of a church, at Fierbois. At the head of a large force, she set out for Orleans, having authority for its command over the best knights of France. At Blois she put on her armour. Marching on the right bank of the Loire, she desired to enter Orleans through

the English lines on that side. She was overruled by Dunois, of which she bitterly complained. It was at length decided that boats loaded with supplies should proceed up the river. The day was stormy, and the vessels could make no way. "The wind will change," said the confident girl. It did change, and the supplies and the troops were landed safely about six miles below the city. Meanwhile, the garrison of Orleans made a sortie on the north, which diverted the attention of the besiegers. An hour after sunset Jeanne d'Arc rode into Orleans at the eastern gate mounted on a white horse, her standard, on which was a figure of the Redeemer, being borne before her. The people by torchlight crowded around her; and she exhorted them to honour God, and to hope in her for their deliverance.

It was the 29th of April when this extraordinary aid, which was firmly believed to be supernatural, arrived to the beleaguered city. In the camp of the English the men would whisper their fears of impending misfortune; for it could not be concealed that a woman, said to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, was coming to Orleans at the head of a great reinforcement. The shouts that came forth from the populous city on that April night would tell that she was come. The next day a herald from the Pucelle presented himself at the English camp. The respect paid to the messenger of princes was denied to the messenger of a reputed sorceress, and he was threatened to be burnt as a heretic. Another herald came to defy Talbot; and to declare, from the commander of the French, that if the messenger of the Pucelle received any harm, it should be visited upon the English prisoners. These proceedings began to spread alarm amongst the brave yeomen of England, who had fronted so many dangers in the field, but who had a terror of witches and magicians, which was a characteristic of the period. The Church had associated witchcraft and heresy in their proceedings against the early reformers; and, amongst the charges against the Waldenses, they were accused of holding converse with the enemy of mankind in the form of a cat, and of riding through the air on magical sticks. When Henry IV. thought it politic to repress the Lollards, he became also very solicitous for the discovery and punishment of witches and sorcerers. The superstition had become familiar to the English, through the denunciations of the ecclesiastical authorities against "heresy, conjurations, necromancy, enchantments, witchcrafts, and other false belief against the faith of holy Church."* The soldiers of Suffolk and Talbot

* See Introduction to "Proceedings against Dame Alice Kyteler." Camden Society.

looked on in terror and amazement, when, on a tower facing the Tournelles, a form appeared in shining armour, and bade them depart if they would avoid misery and shame. William Glasda'e, the commander of the Tournelles, reviled the maiden, and told her to go back to her cows. "Your men will be driven to retreat," she exclaimed, "but you will not live to fly with them." The French waited for succours from other garrisons, before they attempted any great operations against the besiegers. Joan was invariably for instant attack, without heeding disparity of numbers or disadvantages of position. Some of the knights were indignant at her assumed authority; but by her resistless force of will she conquered all opposition. The succours at length were at hand. There was no attempt to bring them into the city under cover of darkness, or while the English were engaged in another quarter. At the head of the French knights and soldiers, followed by the people of the town, Joan rode forth with her banner, between the towers of the besiegers. They looked on with wonder; but there was no resistance. When she returned at night, she threw herself exhausted on a bed. Awakened by a noise, she cried out, "My arms! my horse!" She rushed into the street, mounted with her banner, and rode alone to the spot where she heard the clamour. A rash sortie had been made; and the assailants were driven back. When they saw the white horse and the banner of the Maid, they shouted for joy, and followed her out of the gate into the besiegers' lines. After an engagement of three hours, the English fort was taken and set on fire. It was Joan's first battle. She had fought with the courage and address of the most accomplished knight.

The terror of the English after this sortie from the Burgundy gate became more universal. The next day the Pucelle and the chiefs crossed the Loire in a boat, and led an attack upon a fortification on the left bank. She was slightly wounded, and passed the night in the field. The great force of the besiegers was on the right bank of the river; and the lord of Gaucourt, the governor of Orleans, was opposed to this leading forth of the garrison, to leave the city defenceless, while the English were attacked on the left bank. But the daring and confident girl had completely won the real leadership of the soldiers and the citizens. She had returned to Orleans and had told the chiefs that she had much to do on the morrow. Without any concert with the French leaders she rose early in the morning, and went forth with a tumultuous crowd to the Burgundy gate. It was shut against her egress. The governor was com-

pelled to open it, and she rode out, followed by soldiers and a great multitude. Their counsel being thus rejected, the French knights, with their men at arms, reluctantly followed. But their prudence was soon laid aside in the din of battle. The river had been crossed by Joan, and she had commenced an assault on the Tournelles, the great fort held to be impregnable. The artillery from its walls thinned the ranks of the assailants; but the wonderful Maid was always ready with her rallying cry. She was the first to mount the rampart by a ladder. An arrow struck her, and she fell into the ditch. She was carried off; and after a few natural tears drew the shaft out of her shoulder, and knelt in prayer. The attack had lasted four hours, and nothing had been gained. The retreat was sounded. Joan implored Dunois not to move. "Let our people rest, and eat and drink." Her standard-bearer had remained near the spot whence the Maid was borne away. The lord of Daubon, who was against a retreat, took the standard, and with another, descended into the ditch; and waving the well-known sign of victory, the French rallied round him. Seeing what was taking place, Joan went forward to claim her standard. The English, who had seen her borne off wounded, felt a new alarm. The French advanced again to the attack of the fort, under their marvellous leader. From the other bank the people of Orleans were storming the Tournelles, having crossed the broken arches of the bridge by beams placed on the buttresses. The English were now between two assaults. The soldiers were filled with a superstitious awe. The maiden was on the battlement of the second tower of the works, the first having been taken. The soldiers, with Glasdale their commander, thus surrounded, were retreating into the main defence upon a wooden bridge, when a cannon-ball struck it, and the commander and his men fell into the stream, and were drowned. The prophetic words of the Maid, when Glasdale reviled her, were accomplished. There was now no chance of resistance to the impassioned assaults of the French. The English threw down their arms and were slaughtered, drowned, or taken prisoners, to the number of seven thousand. No aid came from the panic-stricken camp; and the Maiden passed over the repaired bridge into the city, amidst the shouts of the multitude, whilst every steeple sent forth its peals of gratulating bells, and at every church *Te Deum* was sung on that night of victory. The next morning, at break of day, the English marched out from their forts, and formed in order of battle to the north and west of the city. They stood in an attitude of defiance

before the walls. Joan had hastily risen, and was soon at the northern gate. "Attack them not," she said. "If they attack you, defend yourselves." It was Sunday the 8th of May. An altar was brought to the gate; and the priests chanted a solemn service. The English standards were displayed; the trumpets sounded; but they turned their faces from Orleans. The siege was at an end.

It is not necessary to assign any miraculous powers to Jeanne d'Arc in accounting for her wonderful success. She honestly believed herself inspired by Heaven, and she infused into others that belief. An enthusiast herself, she filled a dispirited soldiery and a despairing people with enthusiasm. The great secret of her success was the boldness of her attacks, when military science reposed upon its cautious strategy. In the eyes of the experienced tacticians she risked the safety of the city when she led her excited multitudes to the assault of the Tournelles. In her own self-reliance she would hear of no other counsels but the most daring; and to that contempt of danger she owed her triumphs. In every desperate struggle between individuals and nations boldness is generally the most certain winner. Boldness was the principle which the peasant girl of Domremy maintained to the end of her wonderful career. In eleven days she had stricken terror into an army which had been the terror of France for eleven years. The government of Charles VII. would have rested inactive under the triumph of Orleans. She unceasingly urged the dauphin's progress to Rheims, for she held him not as a king till he was crowned in that city, where all the kings of France for three centuries had been consecrated. The way thither was filled with their enemies. They held the keys of the cities between the Loire and the Seine. But the bold counsels at last prevailed, and Joan's standard was again floating at the head of a French army. On the 11th of June, the duke of Alençon, and the chiefs who had defended Orleans, arrived before Jargeau, which Suffolk occupied. The English earl had come out with his garrison to offer battle. The French had arrived in haste, and they were driven back. But at the command of the Pucelle they returned to the attack, and Suffolk retired within his walls. The bombardment of the town continued for three days; when a breach having been made, Joan led the assault. Jargeau fell, and Suffolk was a prisoner. On the 18th June was fought the battle of Patay. The English fled from the terrible banner that had been first seen at Orleans; and the lords Talbot

and Scales were made prisoners. The hasty retreat of Fastolf brought upon him the undeserved imputation of cowardice; and when he came to the duke of Bedford, at Corbeil, he was deprived of the riband of the garter. The triumph of the victory of the Herrings did not save the good knight from the disgrace of the flight of Patay. But Bedford himself, though a man of great ability, believed, or affected to believe, in a miraculous cause for these reverses of the English. A letter was sent by him, at this period, to the Council at London, in which, according to rule, he addresses the young king: "All things here prospered for you till the time of the siege of Orleans, undertaken of whose advice God only knows. Since the death of my cousin of Salisbury, whom God absolve, who fell by the hand of God, as it seemeth, your people, who were assembled in great number at this siege, have received a terrible check. This has been caused in part, as we trow, by the confidence our enemies have in a disciple and limb of the Devil, called Pucelle, that used false enchantments and sorcery. The which stroke and discomfiture has not only lessened the number of your people here, but also sunk the courage of the remainder in a wonderful manner, and encouraged your enemies to assemble themselves forthwith in great numbers."

It was a false policy of the English chiefs to decry Jeanne d'Arc as a sorceress. It was the ready mode to spread the greatest terror of her exploits amongst their own adherents. The French, with equal confidence, proclaimed her as the favoured of Heaven, who exhibited as much courage as piety. At this juncture, the duke of Bedford secured the doubtful co-operation of the duke of Burgundy; and the cardinal Beaufort, who had raised an army in England for a crusade against the heretics of Bohemia, turned over his troops to the regent of France, to war against the Armagnacs, and to make new efforts against the enchantments which had given them power to resist the long triumphant bravery of the English. They took the field with new hopes. Onward went the Maid, upon her resolved design that Charles VII. should be crowned at Rheims. On the 28th of June twelve thousand Frenchmen marched out of Gien to traverse a country whose towns and fortresses were held by English and Burgundians. They reached Troyes, and encamped before the town. Six days of inactivity were passed, and the French army wanted food; they were without artillery; and it was proposed to retreat to the Loire. Joan was sent for by the king and his council. "Shall I be believed?" she asked. "What-

ever you say," replied the king, "we will attend to." "Then, noble dauphin, assault the town, and you shall enter there to-morrow." On the morrow the famous standard was displayed; and the terrified garrison of Troyes surrendered the place. They went on and took Chalons without resistance. As they approached Rheims, the peasants of her native district came out to look upon the wonderful girl, whom they knew as the shepherdess by wise men accounted mad. After some debate within the town, and great apprehensions of failure in the French camp, Joan urged the king on, and the gates of Rheims were opened. On the 17th July Charles was crowned in its ancient church. There were few nobles present. The Maiden stood with her standard before the altar. The expense of the coronation amounted only to twenty-four Parisian livres. Never was king so inaugurated. All the accustomed pomp was absent; but when the enthusiastic girl kissed the feet of her monarch, her tears were a holier consecration than the mystic oil with which, as the legends told, Clovis had been there baptised. Charles then went on towards Paris, receiving the submission of many towns on his march. Joan thought her mission accomplished; and earnestly desired to return to her father and mother, to keep their herds and flocks. Her counsels now became vacillating. Sometimes Charles retreated, and sometimes marched forward. Bedford had sent him a challenge to meet in the open field, couched in the most opprobrious terms; and he was moving rapidly to bring the French to an engagement. The two armies suddenly met at Senlis; and for three days a battle was vainly expected. Each army then took its own way,—Bedford for Normandy, which had been entered by a hostile force under the constable Richemont. Charles marched on to Paris. On the 12th of September an attack was made at the Faubourg St. Honoré. The intrepid Joan, though she had lost confidence in her miraculous voices, displayed her wonted courage. She scaled the walls; but was wounded, and fell into the fosse. Crawling out from the heaps of dead and dying, she again waved her standard. The old confidence in her powers had deserted the French; and when the attack was repulsed, they reproached her that she had said they should sleep that night in Paris. "You would have slept there," she replied, "if you had fought as I fought." Charles retreated to the Loire. The succeeding winter was passed by the king at Bourges. In the spring the army moved to the relief of Compiègne, which was besieged by the duke of Burgundy. Joan got into the town, and the

same day headed a sortie. She was taken prisoner, and was carried to the Burgundian quarters. Her wars were over.

For four months Joan was confined in the castle of Beurevoir, near Cambrai. She was a prisoner of war to the Burgundians. She was afterwards conveyed to Arras, and to Crotoy; and was finally delivered to the English in their city of Rouen. The university of Paris urged her trial before an ecclesiastical tribunal; and there are letters from that body, full of reproach to the English for not delivering up their prisoner to the justice of the Church. At length letters patent were issued in the name of Henry VI., in which it was stated that, in accordance with the public opinion, and at the especial request of the bishop of Beauvais and the university of Paris, she was to be given up to the bishop, to be examined and proceeded against under his authority. She was subjected for several months to the most searching interrogatories. At fifteen examinations she was never disconcerted, but answered every question with perfect frankness. All the circumstances of her early life were related by her; and her belief in her voices and visions emphatically declared. Her determination to wear the male dress of her triumphs was persisted in. Upon her alleged revelations were founded articles accusing her of sorcery; and upon her declining to submit to the ordinances of the Church, when her voices commanded the contrary, the charge of being a schismatic was also introduced. Heresy and schism, meriting the punishment of fire, were declared to be found against her. The university of Paris ratified the articles of accusation. On a public scaffold at Rouen the sentence of condemnation was read to her by the bishop of Beauvais. Her courage deserted her; and she expressed her contrition and submission. Her sentence of burning at the stake was then to be commuted to perpetual imprisonment. She was taken back to prison, but after two days her confidence returned; and she re-affirmed her belief that her voices came from God; and that, not understanding what the adjuration was that she had been called upon to sign, she had signed in the fear of being burnt. She was now a relapsed heretic, in the terms of the cruel zeal of the persecuting ecclesiastics, and her fate was no longer a matter of doubt. In the old market-place of Rouen a pile of wood was built up; and round it a scaffold was erected, where prelates and nobles might sit to behold the death of the heroic girl. There sat cardinal Beaufort and the bishop of Beauvais; and as Joan stood before them, a sermon was preached, setting forth her atrocities;

and the preacher concluded with, "Joan, go in peace; the Church can no longer protect thee, and delivers thee into secular hands." She was immediately dragged to the pile; the fatal cap of the Inquisition, with the words "hérétique, relapse, apostate, idolâtre," was placed on her head; the fire was kindled. Her last word was "Jesus." On the spot where this deed of infamy was perpetrated, stands one of the monuments by which the French of later times have sought to redeem their share of the disgrace of this murder of the 30th of May, 1431. French historians attempt to fix the greater blame upon the English. It is clear that, although the vengeance of those who had been driven from Orleans and vanquished at Patay was the main cause of this tragedy, it would not have been accomplished except through that terrible power which, under the name of religion, had no quality of mercy when a heretic was to be hunted to the death. The bishop of Beauvais and the cardinal of Winchester knew no distinction of nation when they sat on the scaffold at Rouen to do the work of the Holy Inquisition.

The coronation of Charles VII. at Rheims was to be rivalled by the more gorgeous ceremony of crowning Henry VI. at Paris. On St. George's day of 1430, the boy who had been crowned at Westminster came, with Beaufort, to Calais. They remained there a month. No army could be raised in England, through the "terrifyings" of the Pucelle. At length she was captured; but, even six months after, the soldiers of England deserted, rather than go to a land where their bows and bills were powerless against enchantments. But on the 17th of December, Henry made his public entry into Paris, and was crowned at Notre Dame. He returned to England in February, 1431; and rode into London, amidst as profuse and laboured pageantry as had welcomed his father from Agincourt. He came under very different auspices. Dressed up with the mantle of royalty and the crown on his head, the boy of ten years old was to perform the character of king, that the exhibition might strengthen one of the parties in the state that was aiming at supremacy. Whilst these follies were enacted in England, Harfleur was re-captured by the French. The first trophy of Henry V. was for a while lost. The alliance of the duke of Burgundy was fast slipping away. Every year added to the strength of the national party in France. At every conference for peace the demands of Charles VII. became enlarged. At the congress of Arras, in 1435, the French would only agree to cede Nor-

mandy and Guienne, to be held as fiefs, all other possessions and all claim to the crown being surrendered. The conditions were refused, and the duke of Burgundy abandoned the English alliance. He made a separate treaty with Charles VII.; swearing that he would forget his father's death, and be at perpetual peace with France. Monstrelet says that the young king Henry wept at the news of this peace of 1435. The people of England manifested their indignation by seeking out the subjects of the duke of Burgundy, Flemings and others, to maltreat and murder them. The duke of Bedford, who had steadily upheld the will of his heroic brother, died at this critical period. There was no union in the English councils. The duke of Gloucester would have called up the old heart of England to redeem the losses and disgraces of the six years that were past. The cardinal of Winchester, perhaps more wisely, advocated peace. In the quarrels between these rival leaders in the Council all opportunity for a successful struggle passed away. Paris was retaken by Charles in 1436; and the English were expelled. "When they should pass upon their journey," says Fabyan, "they were derided and scorned of the French nation out of all measure." Successes in Normandy, under the duke of York and Talbot, only prolonged the final issue; and when the duke of Burgundy's possessions were devastated by Talbot in 1437; when Picardy was ravaged in 1440, and Harfleur was once again captured by the English; when York was superseded as regent by Warwick, and Warwick again replaced by York, each making new attempts to recover the lost ascendancy; it was still manifest to the French that the time was approaching when the spirit of nationality would successfully maintain itself against the pretensions of alien rulers. After twenty-five years' captivity, the duke of Orleans was released from his prison in the Tower of London. There is a private contemporary record, which shows the interest that the English took in the passing events connected with France: "Tidings; the duke of Orleans hath made his oath upon the sacrament, and used it, never for to bear arms against England, in the presence of the king and all the lords except my lord of Gloucester; and in proof that my said lord of Gloucester agreed never to his deliverance, when the mass began he took his barge. God give grace the said lord of Orleans be true, for this same week shall he towards France."* The war is continued a few years longer; and then a truce. England is anxious about the terms of

* "Paston Letters." Robert Repps to John Paston, Nov. 1st, 1440.

pacification. Agnes Paston writes to her son on the 14th of February, 1445: "I pray you to send me tidings from beyond sea; for here they are afraid to tell such as be reported." The people were reluctant to believe, and thought it dangerous to say, that their weak young king was to marry a daughter of the duke of Anjou, with the approbation of the French king, whose consent would be bought by the surrender of all that remained of the lands which English treasure and blood had won in that war of twenty years. Their fears were accomplished. Henry was married to Margaret of Anjou in 1445; and one of the conditions of the marriage and the consequent truce was the surrender of Anjou and Maine. Normandy was soon conquered, when Maine, the key to its possession, was gone. Gascony yielded to the French in 1451; and after the last of the great English captains, the dreaded Talbot, fell at Castillon in 1458, Bordeaux was taken. The dream of conquest, which had lasted for more than a century, was, by God's blessing, at an end.

In the statute of the twentieth year of Henry VI. c. 9, is recited that clause of Magna Charta, which provides that no freeman shall be condemned "but by lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land;" and the preamble then goes on to say that in that statute no mention is made how women, ladies of great estate, married or sole, that is to say, duchesses, countesses, or baronesses, shall be put to answer upon indictments of treasons or felonies. It is therefore provided that such ladies, so indicted, shall be tried as peers of the realm are tried. The triumph of the party of cardinal Beaufort over that of the duke of Gloucester had been manifested in the release of the duke of Orleans; and now a stronger measure of humiliation was preparing for the last of the king's uncles—the favourite of the people, learned, and an encourager of learning. His wife, Eleanor, was accused of sorcery. The statute which we have mentioned, was, in all probability, devised to bring her to the block, and thus to destroy Gloucester through his affections. In the common purpose of the encomiasts of the Church in its most corrupted state, it is sought to free Beaufort from the imputation of being the moving cause of these hateful proceedings. "Some writers," says Dr. Lingard, "have attributed the prosecution of dame Eleanor to Beaufort's enmity to her husband. But their assertion stands on the slightest foundation; a mere conjecture of Fox that it might be so, because the witch [of Eye] lived, according to Fabyan, in the neighbourhood of Winchester, of which Beau-

fort was bishop." The most circumstantial account of this passage of history is given in a very interesting chronicle written before 1471; * and there we shall find much firmer foundation for this belief than the "mere conjecture of Fox." This narrative is so curious as a picture of manners, that, in abridging it, we shall retain as much as possible of the original phraseology.

In 1440, on the Tuesday before Midsummer, a priest called sir Richard Wyche, a vicar of Essex, was burnt on Tower-hill for heresy. The numbers of those who perished at the stake in England, whilst Beaufort was supreme, must have gone far to mitigate the papal indignation for his stopping short in his crusade against the reformers of Bohemia, putting the money raised in his capacious coffer. In his cognizance of the proceedings against Joan of Arc, he had learned how charges of sorcery and heresy could be blended; and how the popular sympathy for the poor believer might be turned into indignation against the wicked enchanter. When the Essex vicar was burnt there was murmur and trouble amongst the people, for some said he was a good man and a holy, and put to death by malice; and they went in great numbers to the place where he was burnt, and kissed the ground. In the same year, 1440, in July, two clergymen, Roger Bolingbroke, and Thomas Southwell, a canon of St. Stephen's chapel, "were taken as conspirators of the king's death; for it was said that the said Master Roger should labour to consume the king's person by way of necromancy; and that the said Master Thomas should say masses upon certain instruments with the which the said Master Roger should use his said craft of necromancy." Bolingbroke was a man of science, distinguished in his pursuit of astronomical studies,—described by William Worcester as one of the most famous clerks of all the world. On Sunday, the 25th of July, this accomplished scholar was brought to hear the sermon at Paul's Cross; and "stood in a high stage above all men's heads in Paul's churchyard, before the Cross, while the sermon endured, holding a sword in his right hand and a sceptre in his left hand, arrayed in a marvellous array, wherein he was wont to sit when he wrought his necromancy." The duchess of Gloucester had fled to sanctuary. Bolingbroke was examined before the king's council, according to this chronicle, and confessed that he wrought his necromancy "at the stirring of the aforesaid dame Eleanor to know what should fall of her, and to what estate she should come." This "necromancy"

* Camden Society, 1856.

was evidently, from this description, the usual process of that age, and of much later times, of casting the nativity of the duchess. The observations of the astronomer were then held to be most usefully applied in the calculations of astrology; and Roger Bolingbroke is not to be held undeserving of his reputation as a most famous clerk, for believing in what the most accomplished philosophers of his time believed. But Bolingbroke was to be sacrificed that one greater than he might be crushed. When he had confessed to what was called his necromancy, dame Eleanor "was cited to appear before certain bishops of the king's; that is to say, before Master Harry Chicheley, archbishop of Canterbury; Master Harry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester and cardinal; Master John Kemp, archbishop of York and cardinal; Master William Ayscough, bishop of Salisbury; and other, on the Monday, the 22nd day of July next following, in St. Stephen's chapel of Westminster, for to answer to certain articles of necromancy, of witchcraft or sorcery, of heresy, and of treason." Bolingbroke, the chronicle adds, was brought to witness against her; and he said "she was cause and first stirred him to labour in his necromancy." Then Bolingbroke and Southwell were indicted as principals of treason, and the duchess as accessory. To make the tragic farce complete, a woman called the Witch of Eye was burnt in Smithfield, for having in former days given medicines to Eleanor Cobham to make the duke of Gloucester love her and wed her. The duchess was brought before an ecclesiastical commission in October, when she submitted herself to the correction of the bishops; and on the 9th of November she was condemned to perform all the humiliations of penance in the streets of London, on three several days; "the which penance she fulfilled, and did right meekly, so that the more part of the people had in her great compassion." She was confined at Calais and the Isle of Man for the remainder of her life. The enemies of the duke of Gloucester went probably as far as they dared; and the affrighted woman made that submission to the Church which saved her from the penalties of heresy. Bolingbroke was tried at Guildhall for high treason, and executed with the accustomed cruelties. Southwell died in the Tower before the time appointed for his trial. The accusation of treason was founded upon the charge that at the request of the duchess, the clergymen had made an image of wax like the king, which they placed before the fire, and as it gradually consumed the king would pine and die. That the whole affair was an infamous conspiracy for political pur-

poses there can be little doubt. It could have only been carried through in an ignorant age; and not then, unless juries had been afraid to come themselves under the terrible charge of heresy, in acquitting those destined for sacrifice by a persecuting church, made more terrible in its political ascendancy.

The great ecclesiastics were at this period the moving power of the government. Beaufort had in vain been accused by Gloucester of having estranged the king from him, his sole uncle; for having amassed inordinate riches, not through his church preferment or as having inheritance: "neither office, livelihood, nor captain may be had without too great a good given him, * * * for who that would give most his was the price." These attacks left deep scars. In 1445, Margaret of Anjou was crowned queen of England. The duke of Suffolk, who had negotiated the marriage, now came to strengthen the party of Beaufort in the government. The duke of Gloucester was the only man who stood in the way of the absolute power of the queen and of the favourite who had taken her from the petty court of Anjou to raise her to the highest place of European royalty. The king was a mere puppet of sovereignty; having his head upon the coin, and making a legible signature. Whatever could contribute to the ruin of Gloucester would be acceptable to the churchmen of the council, who had been denounced by him "as preventing men to say what they think of truth." A parliament was called to be held at Cambridge, at the beginning of 1447, but the place of meeting was afterwards changed to Bury St. Edmund's. There was a secret order issued for armed men to be attendant there on the king. The duke of Gloucester was in his place as peer on the 10th of February, when the usual formalities were gone through. On the 11th he was arrested by the high constable of England, and his attendants were seized and sent to different prisons. They were only thirty-two in number, for he came without the large retinues which the great had generally in their train when danger was apprehended. At the end of seventeen days, Humphrey of Gloucester was found dead in his bed. His great adversary, Henry Beaufort, died six weeks after him, at the age of eighty years. His death-bed scene has been depicted by Shakspeare with a terrible power which the soberer statement of the chronicler will not obliterate: "Why should I die, having so much riches? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it.—Fye, will not death be hired, nor will money do nothing?"* These were not unlikely

* Hall, upon the authority of Beaufort's chaplain.

words in the mouth of a dying man who was undoubtedly of "covetise insatiable."

The death of the duke of Gloucester was accomplished, there can be little doubt, by secret murder. Hall has a reflection upon the event which exhibits more of the character of philosophical history than belongs to the old annalists: "There is an old said saw, that a man intending to avoid the smoke, falleth into the fire: so here the queen, minding to preserve her husband in honour, and herself in authority, procured and consented to the death of this noble man, whose only death brought to pass that thing which she would most fain have eschewed, and took from her that jewel which she most desired; for if this duke had lived, the duke of York durst not have made title to the crown: if this duke had lived, the nobles had not conspired against the king, nor yet the commons had not rebelled: if this duke had lived, the house of Lancaster had not been defaced and destroyed; which things happened all contrary by the destruction of this good man."