

the baggage were fleeing with their booty, revoked his barbarous order. The attack had been made by only a few hundred soldiers and peasants, under the command of the lord of Azincourt. The men of the French rear-guard, who had tried to rally, fled as soon as they saw that the English were ready to fight them.

The English remained till evening, plundering the dead and succoring those of the wounded from whom they hoped to receive a ransom. The next morning they returned to finish their work and turned over all the heaps of wounded that lay scattered about the plain, choosing whom to kill and whom to take away.

Never had the French nobility experienced a disaster comparable to that of Azincourt. Courtrai, Crecy, and Poitiers had been surpassed. Of the ten thousand dead, there were counted more than eight thousand nobles, a great part of whom had been massacred after they had surrendered, when Henry V. gave orders to slay the prisoners. Among these were the dukes of Alençon and Brabant, the duke of Bar and his two brothers, the Constable d'Albret, the counts of Nevers, Marle, Fauquemberg, and others, the warlike bishop of Sens, about one hundred and twenty great barons, etc. The duke of Orleans was drawn out, alive, from a heap of dead and wounded, and remained a prisoner, together with the duke of Bourbon, the counts of Eu, Vendôme, and Richemont, the Marshal Boucicaut, and fifteen hundred knights and esquires. The English lost the duke of York, the earl of Suffolk, and about sixteen hundred men.

XXVII.

JEANNE DARC—GUEST.

[Henry V. pursued his French conquests until his death, in 1422. He left to his brother, the duke of Bedford, the care of his French dominions. At that time France was in a deplorable condition, rent with faction, and a prey to anarchy. Her imbecile king, Charles VI., died, and his son, the dauphin, was unable to unite the nation, restore order, and drive out the English. What was needed was a leader, and one came at last in the peasant girl, Jeanne Darc. At the time of her appearance, the English were engaged in besieging the city of Orleans.]

THERE is no story in all the long history of the world more strange and beautiful than the story of the Maid of Orleans. She was born in a wild and woody country, on the borders of Lorraine and Champagne. Her father, Jacques Darc, was a poor laborer. His little Joan, or Jeanne, was bred up like any other poor man's child; but before we can understand either the maiden or her story, we must try to realize a little, if we can, the world she lived in, and how different it was from our world. When she was taken to the little country church, on Sundays and holy days, she would, doubtless, see on the walls the images of crowned saints and angels, of Christ, and the Virgin Mary. They might be very roughly painted, but to the poor village people they would seem beautiful and glorious; nor would they be looked upon as mere pictures. Jeanne and all the others in the church thought they were actually like the real saints and angels in heaven, and would kneel and pray before them without a moment's doubt that they would hear and answer. If the world seemed cold and bleak, the poor cottages rude and bare, and men were rough and miserable, they would like to think of the happy, glorious world, where their friends the saints sat in glory, with a kind thought of pity for them and their troubles. Jeanne loved going to church above all other things.

But when she walked in the great oak forests, near her home,