

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,

she would have a visionary world about her there, too. Where we should only see trees and streams and grass and flowers, and might half fancy, from their beauty and brightness, that they must be alive and happy in a way of their own, every body then thought that there were fairies and wood-spirits. In England, indeed, it was believed that the elves and fairies had been driven away by priests and friars, and that that was the reason they could no longer be seen, as they used to be, dancing in the green meadows. In the forests where Jeanne lived the priest used to drive the fairies away, too; he came to say mass every year beside their favorite fountain, and under a great tree, on which the children would hang garlands to please the "ladies," as they called them. The priests, like every body else, believed in the fairies, but as the tales of them had come down from the old heathen times, they considered them unchristian, and that they ought to be banished.

Thus these people did really and truly seem to live in two worlds, the visible and the invisible; and though the commonplace, the busy, and the dull would half forget the invisible world, the gentle and quiet and thoughtful ones would live in it more than in the visible. Jeanne, besides being a good and pious girl, was full of poetry and imagination; when she was not sewing or spinning by her mother's side she loved dearly to go and pray in the quiet church where the saints were, or to wander in the woods, feeding the wild birds and listening to the church bells.

As she was growing up, this peaceful, visionary life was disturbed by the same miseries which disturbed the rest of the country. Sometimes poor fugitives, who had been driven out of their homes by the war, came through the village; sometimes her own people had to flee, and when they came back would find every thing destroyed or burned. Thus she began to think about the war and her unhappy country, and her whole heart was filled with pity and sorrow. She did what

she could to help the sufferers; when the poor refugees came by she gave them up her own bed, and went to sleep in the barn. She prayed and fasted; and as she brooded over these sad things, and longed to do more, she seemed to be lifted out of herself and the little world about her. The saints seemed to come nearer to her; she began to see bright lights, and to hear strange voices, which no one else could see or hear. From out of the bright light a noble figure with shining wings spoke, and told her it was she who was to help the king of France, and to give him back his kingdom. The poor child was frightened; she was now seventeen or eighteen years old; she said she knew nothing about riding on horseback or leading soldiers. But as time went on she saw more and more visions, heard more and more voices, all bidding her rise and rescue her country.

No one believed her at first; her father and mother were angry, and forbade her leaving home; they even tried to marry her to an honest man of the village. But the impulse was too strong; she felt that she must go. At last she persuaded an old village wheelwright, her uncle, to take her to the nearest town, where she would find soldiers and a captain, who would send her to the dauphin. The captain was greatly puzzled when he saw this village girl arrive, and heard her say that the Lord had sent her to the aid of the dauphin. He was quite ready to think there was something supernatural in the matter, but he was by no means sure that it might not be the work of the devil instead of the saints; for, besides believing in the agency of the invisible saints and angels, every one believed, also, quite as firmly in the power of evil spirits, wizards, and witches; and to the end of her life half the world believed that poor Jeanne Darc was a sorceress inspired by the devil. The parish priest was sent for to sprinkle holy water, and to drive away the evil spirit, if there was one.

But Jeanne was so gentle, so modest, and so firm in declaring that she was sent by God, that people began to believe in

her. The captain decided that he would send her to the king, or the dauphin, as she called him, for he had not yet been crowned. She was dressed in armor, and five or six armed men were appointed to attend her, though they did not know what to think about it, and were half afraid she might be a witch after all. But she stopped to pray at every church she passed, and at last arrived safely at the French court. When she saw the king, whom she recognized at once among the crowd of courtiers, she knelt down before him, saying: "Gentle dauphin, I am called Jeanne the Maid. The King of Heaven sends to tell you, by me, that you shall be consecrated and crowned in the city of Reims." It was in Reims Cathedral that all the kings of France were crowned, and the French people thought as much of that sacred city as the English did of Westminster Abbey.

Whether Charles believed in her divine inspiration or not, it seemed as if there was no other way of saving Orleans, and that this last desperate chance had better be tried. But, before that, it should be inquired into once more whether she might not be influenced by the devil, instead of by God. Four or five bishops examined her this time, but they could find nothing against her. When they desired that she would show a sign to prove that God had sent her, she said: "My sign will be to raise the siege of Orleans." Every one in the whole region declared that she was a saint; the defenders of Orleans had heard that a miraculous virgin was coming to help them, and sent earnestly entreating for her aid.

At last she was allowed to go. She rode forth, no longer like a poor peasant girl, but fully clad in beautiful white armor, mounted on a splendid black horse, and bearing a sacred sword, called the sword of St. Katherine, which, it was said, she had miraculously discovered in the church. Before her was carried a white standard, on which was the picture of God holding the world in his hands, and two angels, each with a lily-flower.

It is easy to imagine what an effect this wonderful sight would produce both on friend and foe. The poor discouraged French roused up suddenly to hope and confidence. Here was this beautiful girl, this beautiful saint, sent expressly by God, to lead them to victory; and if God were for them, who could be against them? As she marched to Orleans, followed by her troop of soldiers, she had an altar set up in the open air, and they all received the sacrament. These wild, fierce men, who would obey no one else, would have followed the maid to the end of the world.

The English, on the other hand, lost heart. They, too, believed Jeanne was miraculously inspired. If it were God fighting against them, what could they do? But in their hearts many of them thought she was a witch and led by the devil. This seemed more terrible still. They were ready enough to fight against men—against the Frenchmen, whom they had beaten so often; but how could they resist the spells of a sorceress?

It was no wonder that it all ended as it did. When Jeanne led the French soldiers against the besiegers, the English, brave as they were, were terrified; they began to see visions, too. Sometimes they saw white butterflies fluttering around her sacred banner; sometimes they saw the saints or Michael, the archangel, among her troops. The siege of Orleans had lasted seven months; in ten days all the English forts were in the hands of the French, and the city was free. It was on a Sunday morning that the English retreated. The maiden caused an altar to be raised in the plain, and before the enemy was well out of sight the rescued people were kneeling around it giving God thanks.

Thus Jeanne had given the "sign" she had promised, and Orleans was delivered. Now she turned to the great work she had at heart—the coronation of the dauphin. It was a long journey to Reims, and a great part of the country through which they must pass was in the hands of the English or the

Burgundians. But the French knew no fears now; they crowded around the maid; always more and more of them followed her standard as she led the king to Reims. Wherever they went they were successful. They took one town after another—even Troyes, where Henry V. had been married; they defeated the English in the battle of Patay. At last they reached Reims, and in its venerable cathedral Charles was anointed, crowned, and consecrated king of France.

---

 XXVIII.

## WARS OF THE ROSES.—GUEST.

[After the raising of the siege of Orleans and the death of the duke of Bedford, the English were rapidly expelled from France. In England a child, Henry VI., was on the throne. The lawless habits acquired by the English nobles during the French war could not be restrained when they returned home. They divided into two factions, one rallying around the house of York and the other around the house of Lancaster, and they soon drifted into civil war. The struggle was ostensibly for the possession of the crown, but there were many causes at work to produce discontent.]



EDWARD IV.

But though we may be inclined to say, then, that the wars were all for nothing, and nothing came of them, they had in

It is hardly necessary to study and recollect all about the twelve battles that were fought, and all the changes and chances of the war. Sometimes one side conquered, and sometimes the other. In the end we may say *neither*, or perhaps *both*, conquered, since a member of the house of Lancaster, marrying a member of the house of York, became undisputed king.

reality a very great effect on the whole future history and state of England. After those wars were over England was much more like what she is now than she ever could have been without them.

In all the past history we have seen what an enormous power the nobles possessed; how they could help or hinder the king and government just as they chose; how they rebelled and led armies about, fighting each other or fighting the king, just as it happened; or, if they had a strong, clever king, whom they respected, following him and fighting for him. How different all that is from any thing we ever see or hear of now! Imagine now if we were to hear that some great duke or earl was going to lead an army against the government!

We all know it is impossible. Dukes and earls have no armies now. They may give their opinions and advice and votes and money, they may serve in the queen's army, as any other gentleman may, and that is all they can do. But up till this time the great lords had always little armies, or even rather large armies sometimes, of their own. They were bound, indeed, to have them; it was on that very condition that they held their estates. The theory of the feudal system was, that the vassals of the king were obliged to furnish so many men to help him in his wars. But when they did not like the king it was quite probable that they would fit out those said men to oppose him; and, if there was a rival claimant to the throne, some of the nobles would take one side and some the other, according as it suited their interest, or, perhaps, according as they thought was their duty.

In such times a rich nobleman, who had a large following, who could make himself popular, and perhaps hire many other soldiers besides his own under-vassals and tenants, would be very powerful indeed, even more powerful than the king himself, like Warwick, the king-maker. In those days there was no regular standing army, such as we have now.

At that time every body was a soldier, and nobody was a soldier. So, when the nobles went to muster up an army, the plowmen, the weavers, the laborers of all sorts, would leave their work and follow them to fight. They were, doubtless, better soldiers than such men would be at present, for they were regularly trained and practiced at certain times, and every man knew, more or less, how to fight, though they were not like the disciplined regiments we have now. In a little while, after a battle or two perhaps, they would go back again to their work, to their plows or their looms. There were some regular soldiers, too, whose regular profession was war, "companions," as they were called, who were trained men, but who belonged to no side and no chief, and who could be hired by any party, city, or rich man who wanted them; and who, when wanted by no one, generally became brigands.

At the time of the Wars of the Roses all the principal nobles of the kingdom took one side or the other, either that of York or Lancaster; each brought his little army behind him, and it was they who fought those twelve battles. At the end of the wars they were nearly all gone—all killed. The family feeling was very strong in those times, and it was a point of honor for a man to revenge the deaths of his relations; then the other side would revenge themselves in return, till we can hardly believe the men who worked these cruel deeds could have called themselves Christians at all. Thus the war became bitterly cruel and savage.

In looking over the pedigrees of those great old families it is quite startling to see how many times we read "killed at Tewkesbury," "killed at St. Albans," "beheaded after Wakefield," and the like. No less than four dukes of Somerset, one after the other, perished in these wars. The end of it all was that the old nobility was almost destroyed, and the feudal system vanished forever. Things began to be much more like what they are now; so this period is generally

looked on as the end of the Middle Ages, and the beginning of modern times.

We cannot suppose the great nobles, or any body else, would have taken all this trouble, raised their armies, and hurried about all over the country, fighting, killing, and being killed, all for love of Henry or Edward, Lancaster or York. Had there not been some grave causes of discontent, it is pretty certain both York and Mortimer would have been forgotten, now that the Lancasters had been sitting on the throne for fifty years, whatever their exact rights might have been at the outset. But there was, in fact, a great deal of discontent, and a spirit of entire disaffection spread abroad among the nation. Every one was ashamed and disgusted at the disgraceful end of the French war, and the pride of the people was not much comforted by the death of the duke of Suffolk or the bishop of Chichester. The state of England itself was also unsatisfactory. Jack Cade and the Kentish men, as we saw, had complained about the way Parliaments were elected. A great many people who formerly used to vote for members were no longer allowed to do so at all, and many of those who still had votes had to give them according to orders, and not according to their own wishes. And Parliament very seldom met at all. Nor was the government strong enough to keep the country quiet and peaceful. High and low were able to defy the law with impunity; the great families were continually carrying on little wars of their own; innumerable robbers ranged over the land, keeping the people in constant alarm and distress, and nobody had power to punish the evil-doers or protect the helpless and innocent.

Moreover the house of Lancaster, both Henry IV. and Henry V., had, in a mistaken zeal for religion, made common cause with the Church, and had persecuted and burnt the Lollards. But, though the Lollards appeared to be quite crushed and put down, in the bottom of their hearts

immense numbers of people believed them to be right and sympathized with them; so that when they had time to think, and were not dazzled and absorbed by Henry's splendid victories, it caused a vast deal of hidden discontent, and turned men's hearts away from their rulers.

Thus with all these grievances, either spoken or unspoken, a great many people were ready for a change. Not that the princes of the house of York were at all likely to remedy any of these things, or ever did so, but that when people are dissatisfied they are willing to hope that any change will be for the better; though it had need to be very, very much better indeed, to make up for the misery of a civil war. We have seen how cruel and hard-hearted the nobles became toward one another; what their followers were obliged to suffer we may imagine. In one beautiful passage which Shakespeare added to the old play of *Henry VI.* he paints it for us very vividly. He shows us how, in one of these battles, a father has unknowingly killed his own son, and a son his own father, who were fighting in opposite ranks; and, as they both lament their cruel fortunes, they think of what is so often forgotten, of the poor wife and mother at home, to whom they must carry the bitter news.

But, though sad and terrible things like this must often have happened, and though the nobles, many of them, became little better than murderers, there is a great consolation in knowing that, on the whole, the mass of the people did not suffer so much as might have been expected. In some of the battles the leaders on both sides gave orders that the poorer people were to be spared, and that only the principal men were to be killed. For the most part the people, except those who were dependent upon the nobles, took no part at all. The merchants and shopkeepers went on with their business; the judges went on circuit and held their assizes, as if nothing was the matter. No towns, no churches, were destroyed, and we have the comfort of

thinking that those who made the quarrel bore the brunt of the punishment.

There is good reason to believe, in fact, that the poor people were better off than they ever were before; for while Edward IV. was king new laws were made to prevent them from spending too much money on their clothes. This subject seems to be always cropping up; we are perpetually having sermons and laws against finery, and very little good they seem to have done. In the very midst of the war a law was passed beginning in this way: "The commons, as well men as women, have worn, and daily do wear, excessive and inordinate array and apparel, to the great displeasure of God, and impoverishing of this realm of England." It goes on to command that common laborers and servants, and their wives, are never to wear cloth costing more than two shillings a yard; nor are they to wear girdles ornamented with silver. Another law was passed forbidding the wives to get their veils and handkerchiefs too fine. Thus it is evident they must have been well off and receiving good wages, or they would never have thought of wanting expensive things of this kind.

But, though the emancipation of the serfs had done a great deal of good and the laborers were in this prosperous condition, some evil had come with it too, and that was that there were now a great many people who had no work and no wages at all. As we saw, after the plague of the Black Death, when there were so few men, and wages rose so high, many landlords would not, or could not, pay them. They left off tilling the land, and turned it into great sheep-farms. Then only two or three men would be wanted, instead of a great many, and the sheep were very profitable, both for food and for their wool. Now there was this to be said in favor of villeinage, that the owner of the land had at least to feed, clothe, and shelter all his villeins, or to see that they had land enough to support them. Even when they were ill or old

they still had to be maintained, and we never hear that they were badly treated in this respect.

But now that was all over; they were free and their own masters, and it was nobody's duty to look after them any longer. They had to try how they liked "a crust of bread and liberty." There began to be a great many beggars; some "sturdy beggars," who would not work; others old and feeble, who could not work; others who could find no work to do. It was very hard to know what to do with all of them; there was always the fear that many of them might turn thieves, as, indeed, they often did. The government did its utmost, and passed a great many laws, many of them very harsh and cruel, about vagabonds and beggars; but it was a long time before it found out any thing like a reasonable way of dealing with them.

We must now see how some of the more distinguished people, the kings and princes, were behaving. The reign of Henry VI., if it can be called a reign, is generally reckoned to have ended after the battle of Towton (1461), which was one of the most cruel and bloody of all the twelve, and in which the Lancastrians were utterly defeated. Henry and Margaret fled, and Edward IV. was crowned king. But the Wars of the Roses were by no means over yet, and it was not very long before he in his turn had to flee, and Henry, who had been caught and imprisoned in the Tower, came forth again a king. For, though Edward was so clever, handsome, and popular, he contrived to give dire offense to the nobles who supported him, and, above all, to the earl of Warwick, the king-maker. The way in which he did this was in choosing to make a love-match instead of marrying according to prudence or policy. The marriage he made was very much beneath his position, since, though his wife was a lady by birth and breeding, she was only the widow of an obscure gentleman, and, to make it still worse, her husband had been on the Lancastrian side.

In these wars it was the practice that whichever side conquered took revenge on the other by depriving all the lords and gentlemen of their estates (even if they escaped with their lives) and dividing them among their own party; so that many great lords and gentlemen were reduced to literal beggary. They might be seen wandering about barefoot and begging their bread in France, while their enemies at home were sitting in their fine houses, eating their bread, and spending their money. Among others there was one John Grey, of whom we read that "King Henry made him knight at the last battle of St. Albans, but little while he enjoyed his knighthood, for in the same field he was slain." His property had been confiscated, and his children were left destitute. His widow, who was young and beautiful, appeared before Edward to implore his compassion. The king was also young, and always ready to fall in love. The lady behaved very modestly and very cleverly; she quite won his heart; and, casting away all thought of prudence or worldly wisdom, Edward determined to marry her.

The English had been very angry at Henry VI.'s marrying a princess who brought no dowry and no high alliances; but assuredly this match would seem worse still, as Margaret had at least been a princess of royal blood. Moreover, Edward had half promised to marry a French princess himself, a sister of the queen of France; and Warwick, who, besides being king-maker, would have wished to be queen-maker also, was very keen in promoting that alliance. He, likewise, wished Edward to give his sister in marriage to a French prince, but he chose to marry her to the duke of Burgundy instead. It was also believed that Warwick would have desired Edward, if he married an English woman at all, to have married one of his own daughters.

Thus he was quite alienated from Edward, though he did not, as yet, take part with Henry. He first made friends with Edward's brother, George, the duke of Clarence, and

gave him the daughter, Isabel, whom he had, perhaps, intended for the king. Through all these wars the nobles were constantly changing sides and betraying one another. Even the royal family itself was not faithful, and Clarence now conspired to betray his brother. Afterward he changed again, and betrayed his father-in-law. He himself was finally betrayed and murdered.

Perhaps the king thought, as he had married greatly beneath his dignity, and his wife and her relations were looked down upon by all the aristocracy of the land, that it would set things right to make them noble now. Accordingly, all the greatest honors and riches were poured out upon them. Her father and her brothers received great titles and estates; her son was married to the heiress of the duke of Exeter, whom Warwick wanted for his own nephew; her sisters were married to the richest young men who could be found, heirs of earls and dukes, whom the lords would have liked to marry their own daughters. All this, therefore, instead of setting things right, angered the earl of Warwick and the rest of the old nobility beyond bearing.

Except for their being "upstarts," however, there was nothing to be said against these relations of the queen. One of them in particular, her brother, Lord Rivers, was good, accomplished, and faithful. But their glory was short-lived, and they paid very dear for it. At last things came to an open rupture, and Warwick, forsaking Edward, allied himself with his most bitter enemy, Margaret of Anjou, who had never ceased stirring and striving to reinstate her husband and son. He now married his other daughter to her son, Edward, so that he had, we may say, two strings to his bow—two daughters who might, in the changes of that changing time, come to be queens of England. This second daughter, Anne, was, indeed, queen for a short time, though not at all by the means her father expected.

As soon as Warwick appeared in England the people, who

loved and admired him, flocked around him in crowds. Edward had to flee out of the country, and to flee in such haste that he took nothing with him, and had no means of paying the captain of the ship which carried him across but by giving him a cloak lined with sable. As to his poor wife, whom he left behind him, as well as his luggage, she took refuge with her young daughters in the sanctuary at Westminster.

Here the poor queen remained, and here her unhappy little son, Edward V., was born. Shakespeare makes her say, "Small joy have I in being England's queen." Katherine of France, who was so despised for descending to marry a private gentleman, was, perhaps, a good deal wiser and happier than poor Elizabeth Woodville, who rose from being a private lady to marry a king. However, it was not very long before Edward returned. His brother Clarence was treacherous again, and deserted Warwick. Two great battles were fought, in both of which Edward was victorious. The first was at Barnet (1471), and there Warwick, the king-maker, was slain; the second was at Tewkesbury, and it utterly ruined the Lancastrian house. The poor young Prince Edward, son of Henry and Margaret, was brutally murdered, it is said by Edward's two brothers, Clarence and Gloucester. Margaret was made prisoner, and Henry was taken back to the Tower, where he very soon after died. The Yorkists gave out that he died of a broken heart, but every body believed that he was murdered, and Richard, duke of Gloucester, had all the credit of it, whether he really deserved it or not. The people soon began to look on poor King Henry as a saint, and said that wonderful miracles were worked at his tomb.