

1421. Henry V. gains several victories over the French, who refuse to acknowledge the treaty of Troyes. His son, afterward Henry VI., is born.

1422. Henry V. and Charles VI. of France die. Henry VI. is proclaimed at Paris King of England and France. The followers of the French dauphin proclaim him Charles VII., king of France. The Duke of Bedford, the English regent in France, defeats the army of the dauphin at Crevant.

1424. The Duke of Bedford gains the great victory of Verneuil over the French partisans of the dauphin and their Scotch auxiliaries.

1428. The English begin the siege of Orleans.

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### JOAN OF ARC'S VICTORY OVER THE ENGLISH AT ORLEANS, A.D. 1429.

The eyes of all Europe were turned toward this scene, where it was reasonably supposed the French were to make their last stand for maintaining the independence of their monarchy and the rights of their sovereign.—HUME.

WHEN, after their victory at Salamis, the generals of the various Greek states voted the prizes for distinguished individual merit, each assigned the first place of excellence to himself, but they all concurred in giving their second votes to Themistocles.\* This was looked on as a decisive proof that Themistocles ought to be ranked first of all. If we were to endeavor, by a similar test, to ascertain which European nation had contributed the most to the progress of European civilization, we should find Italy, Germany, England, and Spain each claiming the first degree, but each also naming France as clearly next in merit. It is impossible to deny her paramount importance in history. Besides the formidable part that she has for nearly three centuries played, as the Bellona of the European commonwealth of states, her influence during all this period over the arts, the literature, the manners, and the feelings of mankind, has been such as to make the crisis of her earlier fortunes a point of world-wide interest; and it may be asserted, without exaggeration, that the future career of every nation was involved in the result of the struggle by which the unconscious heroine of France, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, rescued her country from becoming a second Ireland under the yoke of the triumphant English.

\* Plutarch, Vit. Them., 17.

Seldom has the extinction of a nation's independence appeared more inevitable than was the case in France when the English invaders completed their lines round Orleans, four hundred and twenty-two years ago. A series of dreadful defeats had thinned the chivalry of France, and daunted the spirits of her soldiers. A foreign king had been proclaimed in her capital; and foreign armies of the bravest veterans, and led by the ablest captains then known in the world, occupied the fairest portions of her territory. Worse to her, even, than the fierceness and the strength of her foes, were the factions, the vices and the crimes of her own children. Her native prince was a dissolute trifler, stained with assassination of the most powerful noble of the land, whose son, in revenge, had leagued himself with the enemy. Many more of her nobility, many of her prelates, her magistrates, and rulers, had sworn fealty to the English king. The condition of the peasantry amid the general prevalence of anarchy and brigandage, which were added to the customary devastations of contending armies, was wretched beyond the power of language to describe. The sense of terror and wretchedness seemed to have extended itself even to the brute creation.

"In sooth, the estate of France was then most miserable. There appeared nothing but a horrible face, confusion, poverty, desolation, solitariness, and feare. The lean and bare laborers in the country did terrifie even theeves themselves, who had nothing left them to spoile but the carcases of these poore miserable creatures, wandering up and down like ghostes drawne out of their graves. The least farmes and hamlets were fortified by these robbers, English, Bourgneons, and French, every one striving to do his worst: all men-of-war were well agreed to spoile the countryman and merchant. *Even the cattell, accustomed to the larume bell, the signe of the enemy's approach, would run home of themselves without any guide by this accustomed misery.*"\*

In the autumn of 1428, the English, who were already masters of all France north of the Loire, prepared their forces for the conquest of the southern provinces, which yet adhered to the cause of the dauphin. The city of Orleans, on the banks of that river, was looked upon as the last stronghold of the French national party. If the English could once obtain possession of it their victorious progress through the residue of the kingdom seemed free from any serious obstacle. Accordingly the Earl of Salisbury, one of the bravest and most experienced of the English generals, who had been trained under Henry V., marched to the attack of the all-important city; and, after reducing several places of inferior consequence in the neighborhood, appeared with his army before its walls on the 12th of October, 1428.

The city of Orleans itself was on the north side of the Loire, but

\* De Serres, quoted in the Notes to Southey's "Joan of Arc."

its suburbs extended far on the southern side, and a strong bridge connected them with the town. A fortification, which in modern military phrase would be termed a *tete-du-pont*, defended the bridge head on the southern side, and two towers, called the *Tourelles*, were built on the bridge itself, at a little distance from the *tete-du-pont*. Indeed, the solid masonry of the bridge terminated at the *Tourelles*; and the communication thence with the *tete-du-pont* and the southern shore was by means of a draw-bridge. The *Tourelles* and the *tete-du-pont* formed together a strong fortified post, capable of containing a garrison of considerable strength; and so long as this was in possession of the *Orleannais*, they could communicate freely with the southern provinces, the inhabitants of which, like the *Orleannais* themselves, supported the cause of their dauphin against the foreigners. Lord Salisbury rightly judged the capture of the *Tourelles* to be the most material step toward the reduction of the city itself. Accordingly, he directed his principal operations against this post, and after some severe repulses, he carried the *Tourelles* by storm on the 23d of October. The French, however, broke down the arches of the bridge that were nearest to the north bank, and thus rendered a direct assault from the *Tourelles* upon the city impossible. But the possession of this post enabled the English to distress the town greatly by a battery of cannon which they planted there, and which commanded some of the principal streets.

It has been observed by Hume that this is the first siege in which any important use appears to have been made of artillery. And even at Orleans both besiegers and besieged seem to have employed their cannons merely as instruments of destruction against their enemy's men, and not to have trusted them as engines of demolition against their enemy's walls and works. The efficacy of cannon in breaching solid masonry was taught Europe by the Turks a few years afterward, in the memorable siege of Constantinople.\* In our French wars, as in the wars of the classic nations, famine was looked on as the surest weapon to compel the submission of a well-walled town; and the great object of the besiegers was to effect a complete circumvallation. The great ambit of the walls of Orleans, and the facilities which the river gave for obtaining success and supplies, rendered the capture of the town by this process a matter of great difficulty. Nevertheless, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Suffolk, who succeeded him in command of the English after his death by a cannon ball, carried on the necessary work with great skill and resolution. Six strongly-fortified posts, called *bastilles*, were formed at certain intervals round the town, and the purpose of the English engineers was to draw strong lines between them. During the winter little progress was made with the entrenchments, but

\* The occasional employment of artillery against slight defenses, as at Jargeau in 1428, is no real exception.

when the spring of 1429 came, the English resumed their work with activity; the communications between the city and the country became more difficult, and the approach of want began already to be felt in Orleans.

The besieging force also fared hardly for stores and provisions, until relieved by the effects of a brilliant victory which Sir John Fastolfe, one of the best English generals, gained at Rouvrai, near Orleans, a few days after Ash Wednesday, 1429. With only sixteen hundred fighting men, Sir John completely defeated an army of French and Scots, four thousand strong, which had been collected for the purpose of aiding the *Orleannais* and harassing the besiegers. After this encounter, which seemed decisively to confirm the superiority of the English in battle over their adversaries, Fastolfe escorted large supplies of stores and food to Suffolk's camp and the spirits of the English rose to the highest pitch at the prospect of the speedy capture of the city before them, and the consequent subjection of all France beneath their arms.

The *Orleannais* now, in their distress, offered to surrender the city into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy, who, though the ally of the English, was yet one of their native princes. The Regent Bedford refused these terms, and the speedy submission of the city to the English seemed inevitable. The Dauphin Charles, who was now at Chinon with his remnant of a court despaired of continuing any longer the struggle for his crown, and was only prevented from abandoning the country by the more masculine spirits of his mistress and his queen. Yet neither they nor the boldest of Charles's captains, could have shown him where to find resources for prolonging the war; and least of all could any human skill have predicted the quarter whence rescue was to come to Orleans and to France.

In the village of Domremy, on the borders of Lorraine, there was a poor peasant of the name of Jacques d'Arc, respected in his station of life, and who had reared a family in virtuous habits and in the practice of the strictest devotion. His eldest daughter was named by her parents Jeannette, but she was called Jeanne by the French, which was Latinized into Johanna, and Anglicized into Joan.\*

At the time when Joan first attracted attention, she was about eighteen years of age. She was naturally of a susceptible disposition, which diligent attention to the legends of saints and tales of fairies, aided by the dreamy loneliness of her life while tending her father's flocks,† had made peculiarly prone to enthusiastic fer-

\* "Respondit quod in partibus suis vocabatur Johanneta, et postquam venit in Franciam vocata est Johanna."—*Proces de Jeanne d'Arc*, l. 1, p. 46

† Southey, in one of the speeches which he puts in the mouth of Joan of Arc, has made her beautifully describe the effect on her mind of the scenery in which she dwelt.

“Here in solitude and peace

vor. At the same time she was eminent for piety and purity of soul, and for her compassionate gentleness to the sick and the distressed.

The district where she dwelt had escaped comparatively free from the ravages of war, but the approach of roving bands of Burgundian or English troops frequently spread terror through Domremy. Once the village had been plundered by some of these marauders, and Joan and her family had been driven from their home, and forced to seek refuge for a time at Neufchateau. The peasantry in Domremy were principally attached to the house of Orleans and the dauphin, and all the miseries which France endured were there imputed to the Burgundian faction and their allies, the English, who were seeking to enslave unhappy France.

Thus, from infancy to girlhood, Joan had heard continually of the woes of the war, and had herself witnessed some of the wretchedness that it caused. A feeling of intense patriotism grew in her with her growth. The deliverance of France from the English was the subject of her reveries by day and her dreams by night. Blended with these aspirations were recollections of the miraculous interpositions of Heaven in favor of the oppressed, which she had learned from the legends of her church. Her faith was undoubting; her prayers were fervent. "She feared no danger, for she felt no sin," and at length she believed herself to have received the supernatural inspiration which she sought.

According to her own narrative, delivered by her to her merciless inquisitors in the time of her captivity and approaching death, she was about thirteen years old when her revelations commenced. Her own words describe them best.\* "At the age of thirteen, a voice from God came to her to help her in ruling herself, and that

My soul was rursed, amid the loveliest scenes  
Of unpolluted nature, sweet it was,  
As the white mists of morning roll'd away,  
To see the mountain's wooded heights appear  
Dark in the early dawn, and mark its slope  
With gorse-flowers glowing, as the rising sun  
On the golden ripeness pour'd a deepening light.  
Pleasant at noon beside the vocal brook  
To lay me down, and watch the floating clouds,  
And shape to Fancy's wild similitudes  
Their ever-varying forms; and oh! how sweet,  
To drive my flock at evening to the fold,  
And hasten to our little hut, and hear  
The voice of kindness bid me welcome home."

The only foundation for the story told by the Burgundian priest Jean Monstrelet, and adopted by Hume, of Joan having been brought up as a servant, is the circumstance of her having been once with the rest of her family, obliged to take refuge in an *auberge* in Neufchateau for fifteen days, when a party of Burgundian cavalry made an incursion into Domremy. (See the "Quarterly Review," No. 138.)

\* "Proces de Jeanne d'Arc," vol. 1, p. 53.

voice came to her about the hour of noon, in summer time, while she was in her father's garden. And she had fasted the day before. And she heard the voice on her right, in the direction of the church; and when she heard the voice, she saw also a bright light." Afterward St. Michael, and St. Margaret, and St. Catharine appeared to her. They were always in a halo of glory; she could see that their heads were crowned with jewels; and she heard their voices, which were sweet and mild. She did not distinguish their arms or limbs. She heard them more frequently than she saw them; and the usual time when she heard them was when the church bells were sounding for prayer. And if she was in the woods when she heard them, she could plainly distinguish their voices drawing near to her. When she thought that she discerned the Heavenly Voices, she knelt down, and bowed herself to the ground. Their presence gladdened her even to tears; and after they departed, she wept because they had not taken her back to Paradise. They always spoke soothingly to her. They told her that France would be saved, and that she was to save it. Such were the visions and the voices that moved the spirit of the girl of thirteen; and as she grew older, they became more frequent and more clear. At last the tidings of the siege of Orleans reached Domremy. Joan heard her parents and neighbors talk of the sufferings of its population, of the ruin which its capture would bring on their lawful sovereign, and of the distress of the dauphin and his court. Joan's heart was sorely troubled at the thought of the fate of Orleans; and her Voices now ordered her to leave her home; and warned her that she was the instrument chosen by Heaven for driving away the English from that city, and for taking the dauphin to be anointed king of the Rheims. At length she informed her parents of her divine mission, and told them that she must go to the Sire de Baudricourt, who commanded at Vaucouleurs, and who was the appointed person to bring her into the presence of the king, whom she was to save. Neither the anger nor the grief of her parents, who said they would rather see her drowned than exposed to the contamination of the camp, could move her from her purpose. One of her uncles consented to take her to Vaucouleurs, where De Baudricourt at first thought her mad, and derided her, but by degrees he was led to believe, if not in her inspiration, at least in her enthusiasm, and in its possible utility to the dauphin's cause.

The inhabitants of Vaucouleurs were completely won over to her side by the piety and devoutness which she displayed, and by her firm assurance in the truth of her mission. She told them that it was God's will that she should go to the king, and that no one but her could save the kingdom of France. She said that she herself would rather remain with her poor mother, and spin; but the Lord had ordered her forth. The fame of "The Maid," as she was

termed, the renown of her holiness, and of her mission, spread far and wide. Baudricourt sent her with an escort to Chinon, where the Dauphin Charles was dallying away his time. Her Voices had bidden her assume the arms and the apparel of a knight; and the wealthiest inhabitant of Vaucouleurs had vied with each other in equipping her with war-horse, armor, and sword. On reaching Chinon, she was, after some delay, admitted into the presence of the dauphin. Charles designedly dressed himself far less richly than many of his courtiers were appareled, and mingled with them, when Joan was introduced in order to see if the Holy Maid would address her exhortations to the wrong person. But she instantly singled him out, and kneeling before him, said, "Most noble dauphin, the King of Heaven announces to you by me that you shall be anointed and crowned king in the city of Rheims, and that you shall be his viceregent in France." His features may probably have been seen by her previously in portraits, or have been described to her by others; but she herself believed that her Voices inspired her when she addressed the king;\* and the report soon spread abroad that the Holy Maid had found the king by a miracle; and this, with many other similar rumors, augmented the renown and influence that she now rapidly acquired.

The state of public feeling in France was now favorable to an enthusiastic belief in a divine interposition in favor of the party that had hitherto been unsuccessful and oppressed. The humiliations which had befallen the French royal family and nobility were looked on as the just judgments of God upon them for their vice and impiety. The misfortunes that had come upon France as a nation were believed to have been drawn down by national sins. The English, who had been the instruments of Heaven's wrath against France, seemed now, by their pride and cruelty, to be fitting objects of it themselves. France in that age was a profoundly religious country. There was ignorance, there was superstition, there was bigotry; but there was Faith—a faith that itself worked true miracles, even while it believed in unreal ones. At this time, also one of those devotional movements began among the clergy in France, which from time to time occur in national churches, without it being possible for the historian to assign any adequate human cause for their immediate date or extension. Numberless friars and priests traversed the rural districts and towns of France, preaching to the people that they must seek from Heaven a deliverance from the pillages of the soldiery and the insolence of the foreign oppressors.† The idea of a Providence that works only by general laws was wholly alien to the feelings of the age. Every political event as well as every natural phenomenon, was believed to be the immediate result of a special man-

\* "Procès de Jeanne d'Arc," vol. I., p. 56.  
 † See Sismondi, vol. xiii., p. 114; Michelet, vol. v., livre, 2.° to fin. broché.

date of God. This led to the belief that his holy angels and saints were constantly employed in executing his commands and mingling in the affairs of men. The Church encouraged these feelings, and at the same time sanctioned the concurrent popular belief that hosts of evil spirits were also ever actively interposing in the current of earthly events, with whom sorcerers and wizards could league themselves, and thereby obtain the exercise of supernatural power.

Thus all things favored the influence which Joan obtained both over friends and foes. The French nation as well as the English and the Burgundians, readily admitted that superhuman beings inspired her; the only question was whether these beings were good or evil angels; whether she brought with her "airs from heaven or blasts from hell." This question seemed to her countrymen to be decisively settled in her favor by the austere sanctity of her life, by the holiness of her conversation, but still more by her exemplary attention to all the services and rites of the Church. The dauphin at first feared the injury that might be done to his cause if he laid himself open to the charge of having leagued himself with a sorceress. Every imaginable test therefore, was resorted to in order to set Joan's orthodoxy and purity beyond suspicion. At last Charles and his advisers felt safe in accepting her services as those of a true and virtuous Christian daughter of the Holy Church.

It is indeed probable that Charles himself and some of his counselors may have suspected Joan of being a mere enthusiast, and it is certain that Dunois, and others of the best generals, took considerable latitude in obeying or deviating from the military orders that she gave. But over the mass of the people and the soldiery her influence was unbounded. While Charles and his doctors of theology, and court ladies, had been deliberating as to recognizing or dismissing the Maid, a considerable period had passed away, during which a small army, the last gleanings, as it seemed, of the English sword, had been assembled at Blois, under Dunois, La Hire, Xaintrailles, and other chiefs, who to their natural valor were now beginning to unite the wisdom that is taught by misfortune. It was resolved to send Joan with this force and a convoy of provisions to Orleans. The distress of that city had now become urgent. But the communication with the open country was not entirely cut off: the Orleanais had heard of the Holy Maid whom Providence had raised up for their deliverance, and their messengers earnestly implored the dauphin to send her to them without delay.

Joan appeared at the camp at Blois, clad in a new suit of brilliant white armor, mounted on a stately black war-horse, and with a lance in her right hand, which she had learned to wield with skill and grace.\* Her head was unhelmeted; so that all could

\* See the description of her by Gui de Laval, quoted in the note to Miche-

behold her fair and expressive features, her deep-set and earnest eyes, and her long black hair, which was parted across her forehead, and bound by a ribbon behind her back. She wore at her side a small battle-axe, and the consecrated sword marked on the blade with five crosses, which had at her bidding been taken for her from the shrine of St. Catharine at Fierbois. A page carried her banner, which she had caused to be made and embroidered as her Voices enjoined. It was white satin,\* strewn with fleurs-de-lis; and on it were the words, "JHESUS MARIA," and the representation of the Saviour in his glory. Joan afterward generally bore her banner herself in battle; she said that though she loved her sword much, she loved her banner forty times as much; and she loved to carry it, because it could not kill any one.

Thus accoutered, she came to lead the troops of France, who looked with soldierly admiration on her well-proportioned and upright figure, the skill with which she managed her war-horse, and the easy grace with which she handled her weapons. Her military education had been short, but she had availed herself of it well. She had also the good sense to interfere little with the maneuvers of the troops, leaving these things to Dunois, and others whom she had the discernment to recognize as the best officers in the camp. Her tactics in action were simple enough. As she herself described it, "I used to say to them, 'Go boldly in' among the English,' and then I used to go boldly in myself."† Such, as she told her inquisitors, was the only spell she used, and it was one of power. But while interfering little with the military discipline of the troops, in all matters of moral discipline she was inflexibly strict. All the abandoned followers of the camp were driven away. She compelled both generals and soldiers to attend regularly at confessional. Her chaplain and other priests marched with the army under her orders; and at every halt, an altar was set up and the sacrament administered. No oath or foul language passed without punishment or censure. Even the roughest and most hardened veterans obeyed her. They put off for a time the bestial coarseness which had grown on them during a life of bloodshed and rapine; they felt that they must go forth in a new spirit to a new career, and acknowledged the beauty of the holiness in which the heaven-sent Maid was leading them to certain victory.

Joan marched from Blois on the 25th of April with a convoy of provisions for Orleans, accompanied by Dunois, La Hire, and the other chief captains of the French, and on the evening of the 28th they approached the town. In the words of the old chronicler

let, p. 69; and see the account of the banner at Orleans, which is believed to bear an authentic portrait of the Maid, in Murray's "Hand-book for France," p. 175.

\* "Proces de Jeanne d'Arc," vol. 1, p. 238.

† Id. lib.

Hall:\* "The Englishmen, perceiving that thei within could not long continue for faute of vitaille and powder, kepte not their watche so diligently as thei were accustomed, nor scoured now the countrey environed as thei before had ordained. Whiche negligence the citizens shut in perceiving, sent worde thereof to the French capitaines, which, with Pucelle, in the dedde tyme of the nighte, and in a greate rayne and thundere, with all their vitailo and artillery, entered into the citie."

When it was day, the Maid rode in solemn procession through the city, clad in complete armor, and mounted on a white horse. Dunois was by her side, and all the bravest knights of her army and of the garrison followed in her train. The whole population thronged around her; and men, women, and children strove to touch her garments, or her banner, or her charger. They poured forth blessings on her, whom they already considered their deliverer. In the words used by two of them afterward before the tribunal which reversed the sentence, but could not restore the life of the Virgin-martyr of France, "the people of Orleans, when they first saw her in their city, thought that it was an angel from heaven that had come down to save them." Joan spoke gently in reply to their acclamations and addresses. She told them to fear God, and trust in him for safety from the fury of their enemies. She first went to the principal church, where *Te Deum* was chanted; and then she took up her abode at the house of Jacques Bourcier, one of the principal citizens, and whose wife was a matron of good repute. She refused to attend a splendid banquet which had been provided for her, and passed nearly all her time in prayer.

When it was known by the English that the Maid was in Orleans, their minds were not less occupied about her than were the minds of those in the city; but it was in a very different spirit. The English believed in her supernatural mission as firmly as the French did, but they thought her a sorceress who had come to overthrow them by her enchantments. An old prophecy, which told that a damsel from Lorraine was to save France, had long been current, and it was known and applied to Joan by foreigners as well as by the natives. For months the English had heard of the coming Maid, and the tales of miracles which she was said to have wrought have been listened to by the rough yeomen of the English camp with anxious curiosity and secret awe. She had sent a herald to the English generals before she marched for Orleans, and he had summoned the English generals in the name of the Most High to give up to the Maid, who was sent by Heaven, the keys of the French cities which they had wrongfully taken; and he also solemnly adjured the English troops, whether archers, or men of the companies of war, or gentlemen, or others, who were before the city of Orleans, to depart thence to their homes, under peril

\* Hall, f. 127.