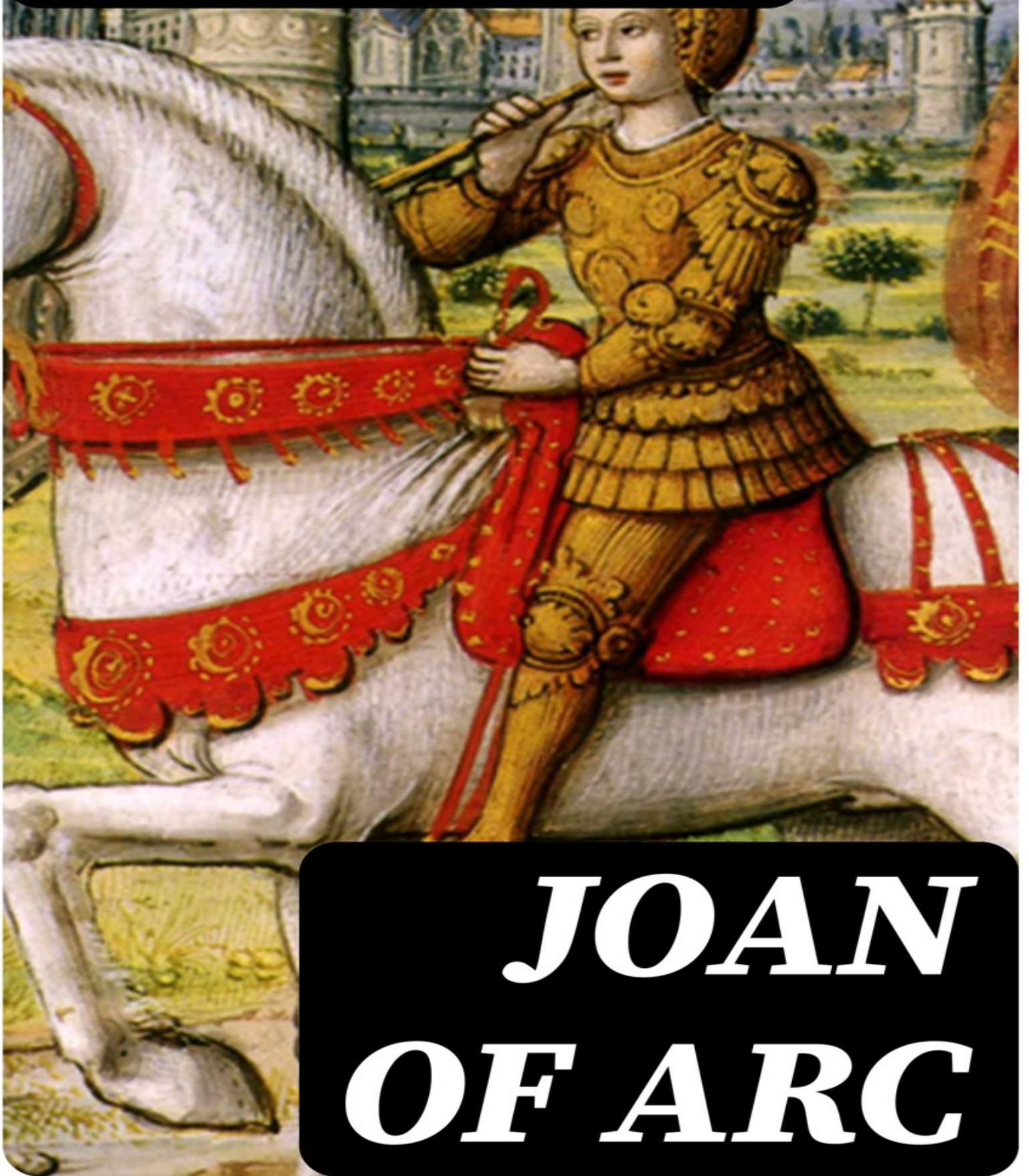


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***JOAN
OF ARC***

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Joan of Arc

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CHAPTER I FRANCE IMPERISHABLE

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THE SOUL OF JEANNE D'ARC

She came not into the Presence as a martyred
saint might come,
Crowned, white-robed and adoring, with very
reverence dumb—
She stood as a straight young soldier,
confident, gallant, strong,
Who asks a boon of his captain in the sudden
hush of the drum.

She said: "Now have I stayed too long in this
my place of bliss,
With these glad dead that, comforted, forget
what sorrow is
Upon that world whose stony stair they climbed
to come to this.

"But lo, a cry hath torn the peace wherein so
long I stayed,
Like a trumpet's call at Heaven's wall from a
herald unafraid,—
A million voices in one cry, '*Where is the Maid,
the Maid?*'

"I had forgot from too much joy that olden task
of mine,

But I have heard a certain word shatter the
chant divine,
Have watched a banner glow and grow before
mine eyes for sign.

"I would return to that my land flung in the
teeth of war,
I would cast down my robe and crown that
pleasure me no more,
And don the armor that I knew, the valiant
sword I bore.

"And angels militant shall fling the gates of
Heaven wide,
And souls new-dead whose lives were shed like
leaves on war's red tide
Shall cross their swords above our heads and
cheer us as we ride.

"For with me goes that soldier saint, Saint
Michael of the sword,
And I shall ride on his right side, a page beside
his lord,
And men shall follow like swift blades to reap a
sure reward.

"Grant that I answer this my call, yea, though
the end may be
The naked shame, the biting flame, the last,
long agony;
I would go singing down that road where fagots
wait for me.

"Mine be the fire about my feet, the smoke
above my head;
So might I glow, a torch to show the path my
heroes tread;
My Captain! Oh, my Captain, let me go back!"
she said.
—*Theodosia Garrison.*

In the fourth year of the Great War (1918), the sufferings of France, the immemorial battlefield of nations, were in all our hearts. We heard from time to time that France was "bled white"; that she had been injured past recovery; that she was dying. Students of History know better than this. France does not die. She bleeds; yes! she has bled, and stanching her wounds and gone gloriously on, and bled again, since the days when Gaul and Iberian, Kymrian and Phoenician, Hun and Goth, raged and fought to and fro over the patient fields of the "pleasant land." Ask Caesar and Vercingetorix, Attila and Theodoric, Clovis and Charles the Hammer, if France can die, and hear their shadowy laughter! Wave after wave, sea upon sea, of blood and carnage, sweep over her; she remains imperishable. The sun of her day of glory never sets.

Her darkest day, perhaps, was that against which her brightest flower shines white. In telling, however briefly, the story of Joan the Maid, it is necessary to call back that day, in some ways so like our own; to see what was the soil from which that flower sprang in all its radiant purity.

The Hundred Years' War prepared the soil; ploughed and harrowed, burned and pulverized: that war which began in 1340 with Edward III. of England's assuming the title of King

of France and quartering the French arms with those of England; which ended in 1453 with the departure of the English from France, which they had meantime (in some part) ruled and harried. Their departure was due chiefly to the genius of a peasant girl of eighteen years.

France in the fifteenth century: what was it like?

King Charles VI. of France (to go back no further) whose reign Sully, "our own good Maximilian," calls "the grave of good laws and good morals in France," was not yet twelve years old when (in 1380) his father, Charles V., died. His majority had been fixed at fourteen, and for two years he was to remain under the guardianship of his four uncles, the Dukes of Anjou, Berry, Burgundy and Bourbon. With the fourth, his mother's brother, we have no concern, for he made little trouble; the other three were instantly in dispute as to which should rule during the two years.

The struggle was a brief one; Philip of Burgundy, surnamed the Bold, was by far the ablest of the three. When the young king was crowned at Rheims (October 4th, 1380), Philip, without a word to anyone, sat him down at his nephew's side, thus asserting himself premier peer of France, a place which was to be held by him and his house for many a long day.

At seventeen, Charles was married (in the Cathedral of Amiens, the second jewel of France, where that of Rheims was the first) to Isabel of Bavaria, of infamous memory; and the first shadows began to darken around him.

The war with England was going on in a desultory fashion. Forty years had passed since Créçy. The Dukes of Lancaster and Gloucester, uncles and regents of Richard II.,

the young English king, were not the men to press matters, and Charles V. of France was wise enough to let well alone. The young king, however, and his Uncle Philip of Burgundy, thought it would be a fine thing to land in England with a powerful army, and return the bitter compliments paid by Edward III. "Across the Channel!" was the cry, and preparations were made on a grand scale. In September, 1386, thirteen hundred and eighty-seven vessels, large and small, were collected for the voyage; and Olivier de Clisson, Constable of France, built a wooden town which was to be transported to England and rebuilt after landing, "in such sort," says Froissart, "that the lords might lodge therein and retire at night, so as to be in safety from sudden awakenings, and sleep in security." Along the Flemish and Dutch coasts, vessels were loaded by torchlight with "hay in casks, biscuits in sacks, onions, peas, beans, barley, oats, candles, gaiters, shoes, boots, spurs, iron, nails, culinary utensils, and all things that can be used for the service of man."[\[1\]](#) The Flemings and Hollanders demanded instant payment and good prices. "If you want us and our service," they said, "pay us on the nail; otherwise we will be neutral."[\[2\]](#)

The king was all impatience to embark, and hung about his ship all day. "I am very eager to be off!" he would say. "I think I shall be a good sailor, for the sea does me no harm." One would have thought he was sailing round the world, instead of across the British Channel. Unfortunately for the would-be navigator, the Duke of Berry, for whom he was waiting, was not eager to be off: did not want to go at all, in fact; answered Charles's urgent letters with advice "not to

take any trouble, but to amuse himself, for the matter would probably terminate otherwise than was imagined."[\[3\]](#) In mid-October, when the autumn storms were due, Uncle Berry appeared, and was met by reproaches. "But for you, uncle," exclaimed Charles, "I should have been in England by this time. If anyone goes," he added, "I will."

But no one went.

"'One day when it was calm,' says the monk of St. Denis, 'the king, completely armed, went with his uncles aboard of the royal vessel; but the wind did not permit them to get more than two miles out to sea, but drove them back to the shore they had just left in spite of the sailors' efforts. The king, who saw with deep displeasure his hopes thus frustrated, had orders given to his troops to go back, and at his departure, left, by the advice of his barons, some men-of-war to unload the fleet, and place it in a place of safety as soon as possible. But the enemy gave them no time to execute the order. As soon as the calm allowed the English to set sail, they bore down on the French, burned or took in tow to their own ports the most part of the fleet, carried off the supplies, and found two thousands casks full of wine, which sufficed a long while for the wants of England.'"[\[3\]](#)

Charles decided to let England alone for a while, and turned his thoughts elsewhere. He would visit Paris; he would make a Royal Progress through his dominions, would show himself king indeed, free from avuncular trammels. So said, so done. Paris received him with open arms; the king was good and gentle; people liked to see him passing along the street. He abated certain taxes, restored certain liberties; hopes and gratulations were in the air. He lodged

in his palace at St. Paul, that home of luxury and tragedy, with "its great ordered library, its carved reading-desks, its carefully painted books, and the perfumed silence that turns reading into a feast of all the senses,"[4] that palace "made for a time in which arms had passed from a game to a kind of cruel pageantry, and in which the search for beauty had ended in excess, and had made the decoration of life no longer ancillary to the main purpose of living, but an unconnected and insufficient end of itself." [4]

In this palace of his own building, Charles V. had died. Here his son grew up, handsome, amiable, flighty; here he brought his bride in the splendor of her then unsullied youth; here was born the prince for whom the Maid of France was to recover a lost kingdom.

After frolicking awhile with his good people of Paris, Charles started once more on his travels, and for six months wandered happily and expensively through his kingdom.

"When the king stopped anywhere, there were wanted for his own table, and for the maintenance of his following, six oxen, eighty sheep, thirty calves, seven hundred chickens, two hundred pigeons, and many other things besides. The expenses for the king were set down at two hundred and thirty livres a day, without counting the presents which the large towns felt bound to make him." [5]

Wherever he went, he heard tales of the bad government of his uncles; listened, promised amendment; those uncles remaining the while at home in much disquiet of mind. As the event turned out, their anxiety was needless. Charles's tragic fate was even then closing about him, and the power was soon to be in their hands again. In June, 1392, Olivier

de Clisson was waylaid after banqueting with the king at St. Paul, stabbed by Peter de Craon, a cousin of the Duke of Brittany, and left for dead. The news coming suddenly to the king threw him into great agitation; the sight of his servant and friend, bathed in blood, added to his discomposure. He vowed revenge and declared instant war on the Duke of Brittany. In vain the other uncles sought to quiet his fury; his only reply was to summon them and his troops to Le Mans, and start with them on the fatal march to Brittany. It was in the great forest of Le Mans that the curse of the Valois, long foreshadowed, if men had had eyes to see, came upon the unhappy king. The heat was excessive; he was clad in heavy, clinging velvets and satins. He was twice startled, first by the appearance of a white-clad madman, who, springing out of the woods, grasped his horse by the bridle, crying, "Go no further! Thou art betrayed!" then by a sudden clash of steel, lance on helmet of a page overcome by the heat. At this harsh sound, the king was seen to shudder and crouch for an instant; then, drawing his sword and rising in his stirrups, he set spurs to his horse, crying, "Forward upon these traitors! They would deliver me up to the enemy!" He charged upon his terrified followers, who scattered in all directions. Several were wounded, and more than one actually killed by the king in his frenzy. None dared approach him; he rode furiously hither and thither, shouting and slashing, till when utterly exhausted, his chamberlain, William de Martel, was able to come up behind and throw his arms round the panting body. Charles was disarmed, lifted from his horse, laid on the ground. His brother and

uncles hastened to him, but he did not recognize them; his eyes were set, and he spoke no word.

"'We must go back to Le Mans,' said the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy; 'here is an end of the trip to Brittany.'

"On the way they fell in with a wagon drawn by oxen: in this they laid the King of France, having bound him for fear of a renewal of his frenzy, and so took him back, motionless and speechless, to the town."[\[6\]](#)

Thus began the agony which was to endure for thirty long years. There were lucid intervals, in which the poor king would beg pardon of all he might have injured in his frenzy: would ask to have his hunting-knife taken away, and cry to those about him, "If any of you, by I know not what witchcraft, be guilty of my sufferings, I adjure him in the name of Jesus Christ, to torment me no more, and to put an end to me forthwith without making me linger so."[\[7\]](#)

He did not know his false, beautiful wife, but was in terror of her. "What woman is this?" he would say. "What does she want? Save me from her!"[\[7\]](#)

At first every care was given him; but in 1405, we find the poor soul being "fed like a dog, and allowed to fall ravenously upon his food. For five whole months he had not a change of clothes."[\[8\]](#) Finally someone was roused to shame and remorse at the piteous sight; he was washed, shaved, and decently clothed. It took twelve men to accomplish the task, but directly it was done, the poor soul became quiet, and even recognized some of those about him. Seeing Juvenal des Ursins, the Provost of Paris, he said, "Juvenal, let us not waste our time!"—surely one of the most piteous of recorded utterances.

The gleams of reason were few and feeble. In one of them, the king (in 1402) put the government of the realm into the hands of his brother, Louis, Duke of Orleans: Burgundy took fire at once, and the fight was on, a fight which only our own day can parallel.

We can but glance briefly at some of its principal features. In 1404 Philip the Bold of Burgundy (to whom we might apply Philip de Comines' verdict on Louis XI: "in fine, for a prince, not so bad!") died, and his son John the Fearless ruled in his stead. His reign began auspiciously. He inclined to push the war with England; he went out of his way to visit his cousin of Orleans. The two princes dined together with the Duke of Berry; took the holy communion together, parted with mutual vows of friendship. Paris was edified, and hoped for days of joyful peace. A few nights after, as Orleans was returning from dining with Queen Isabel, about eight in the evening, singing and playing with his glove, he was set upon by a band of armed men, emissaries of Burgundy, and literally hacked to pieces. Now all was confusion. The poor king was told to be angry, and was furious: sentenced Burgundy to all manner of penances, and banished him for twenty years. Unfortunately, Burgundy was at the moment preparing to enter Paris as a conqueror. Learning this, King, Queen, Dauphin and Court fled to Tours, and Burgundy found no one in Paris to conquer. This was awkward; the king's suffering person was still a necessary adjunct toward ruling the kingdom. Burgundy made overtures; begged pardon; prayed "my lord of Orleans and my lords his brothers to banish from their hearts all hatred and vengeance." The king was bidden to forgive my lord of

Burgundy, and obeyed. A treaty was made; peace was declared; the king returned, and all Paris went out to meet him, shouting, "*Noë!*"

This was in 1409; that same year, Charles of Orleans, son of the murdered duke, lost his wife, Isabel of France, daughter of the king. A year later he married Bonne d'Armagnac, daughter of Bernard of that name, a Count of Southern France, bold, ambitious, unscrupulous. Count Bernard instantly took command of the Orleanist party, in the name of his son-in-law. He vowed revenge on Burgundy for the murder of Duke Louis, and called upon all good and true men to join his standard; thenceforward the party took his name, and Burgundian and Armagnac arrayed themselves against each other.

Now indeed, the evil time came upon France. She was cut literally in twain by the opposing factions. The hatred between them was not only traditional, but racial. Burgundy gathered under his banner all the northern people, those who spoke the *langue d'oïl*; in the south, where the *langue d'oc* was spoken, Gascon and Provençal flocked to the standard of Armagnac. Backward and forward over terrified France raged the ferocious soldiery. Count Bernard was a brutal savage, but he was a great captain. The Albrets and many another proud clan were ready to fight under his banner; the cause did not specially matter, so long as fighting and plunder were to be had. Among them, they formed the first infantry of France. Wherever they marched, terror ran before them. They summoned the peasantry to bind on the white cross of Armagnac; he who refused lost arm, leg, or life itself, on the spot. This method of recruiting

proved eminently successful, and the Count soon had a goodly army.

John the Fearless of Burgundy ("who," says a French writer, "might better have been called John the Pitiless, since the only fear he was without was that of God") was hardly less ferocious than his enemy. In one battle he slew some thousands of unarmed citizens: in another he massacred twenty-five thousand Armagnacs at one stroke. One would really think it had been the twentieth century instead of the fifteenth.

Burgundy, cunning as well as ferocious, won over to his side first Queen Isabel, false as she was fair and frail; then the Kings of Sicily and Spain. Still seeking popularity, he besieged Calais, but was driven off by the English; finally he took possession of Paris and the king, and ruled both for a time with success and satisfaction.

Both parties did homage to Henry IV. of England (1399-1413), who took the provinces they offered and kept his own counsel.

By and by there was trouble in Paris; the Butchers, a devout body, who carried axe or cleaver in one hand and rosary in the other, were scandalized by the dissolute habits of Louis the Dauphin and his followers; took it upon themselves to mend matters. They turned axe and cleaver upon the young courtiers; slew, tortured, imprisoned, at their will, with psalms and canticles on their lips. Moreover, encouraged by Burgundy, their friend and patron, they preached daily to the Dauphin, and a Carmelite monk of their following reproved him by the hour together. Bored and enraged, young Louis wrote to the Armagnacs, begging

them to deliver him. They rushed with joyous ferocity to the rescue. The Butchers were dispersed; Burgundy was forced to flee from Paris, leaving the jealously guarded person of the king in the hands of the enemy. The Orleanist princes entered Paris in triumph; everybody, everything, from the Dauphin himself to the images of Virgin and saints, was draped in the white scarf of the Armagnacs.

In 1414 a peace was patched up: it was agreed that neither the white scarf nor Burgundy's cross should be worn. Nothing special was said about the murdering, which seems to have gone on none the less, albeit less openly.

In 1413 Henry (IV.) of Lancaster died, and Henry (V.) of Monmouth reigned in his stead. The day of desultory warfare was over. Unhappy France, bleeding at every pore from the blows of her own children, must now face the might of England, led by one of the world's greatest captains. Torn by factions, weakened by loss of blood, ridden first by one furious free-booter and then another, what chance had she? Trembling, her people asked the question: the answer was Agincourt.

Footnote

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[1] Guizot, "Popular History of France," III, p. 20.

[2] Guizot, "Popular History of France," III, p. 21.

[3] Guizot, "Popular History of France," III, p. 21.

[4] Belloc, "Paris," p. 248.

[5] Guizot, III, p. 22.

[6] Guizot, III, p. 27.

[7] Guizot, III, p. 28.

[8] Guizot, III, p. 29.



CHAPTER II THE LION AND THE LILIES

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"Fair stood the wind for France."—*Michael Drayton*.

I yield to no one in my love and admiration for Henry V. in his nobler aspects, but I am not writing his story now. He came to France, not as the debonair and joyous prince of our affections, but as a conqueror; came, he told the unhappy French, as the instrument of God, to punish them for their sins. The phrase may have sounded less mocking then than it does to-day. France knew all about the sins; she had suffered under them, almost to death; it seemed hard that she must bear the punishment too.

Neither John of Burgundy nor Bernard of Armagnac was at Agincourt. They hovered apart, two great eagles—or vultures, shall we say?—watching, ready to pounce when their moment struck. The battle lost and won, both chiefs made a dash for Paris and the king. Armagnac made the better speed; Burgundy arrived to find his enemy, with six thousand fierce Gascons, already in possession of the city, king and Dauphin both in his hands, and the self-constituted Constable of France, in lieu of Charles d'Albret, slain in the great battle.

Savage though he was, Armagnac was a Frenchman, and a great captain. For some months he kept not only Burgundy but England at bay, holding the royal city against all comers. He even made a dash on Harfleur (now, 1415, in the hands of the English) which might have been successful but for the cowardice of some of his followers. He promptly

hanged the cowards, but the moment was lost. Returning to Paris, he found the Burgundians making headway; banished, hanged, drowned, beheaded, right and left, imposed tremendous taxes, and for a time fancied himself, and seemed almost to be, virtual king of France.

It was only seeming; Burgundy's hour was at hand. Among those banished by Armagnac was Queen Isabel, whom (after drowning one of her lovers in a sack) he had sent off to prison in the castle of Tours. Down swept John the Fearless, carried her off, proclaimed her Regent, and in her name annulled the recent tax edicts. This was a mortal blow to Armagnac. His Gascons held Paris for him, but without money he could not hold them. Furious, he laid hands on whatever he could find; "borrowed" church vessels of gold and silver and melted them down to pay his men. All would not do. Paris now hated as much as it feared him and his Gascons. A little while, and hate, aided by treachery, triumphed over fear. One night the keys of the St. Germain gate were stolen from their keeper—some say by his own son. Eight hundred Burgundians crept in, headed by the Sire de l'Isle-Adam: crept, pounced, first on that Palace where Tragedy and Madness kept watch and watch; then, the king once in their hands, on the holders of the city. The Dauphin fled to the Bastille. Armagnac and his chief followers were betrayed and imprisoned. The banished Butchers returned, thirsting for blood. The hunt was up.

What followed was a foreshadowing of St. Bartholomew, of the Terror, of the Commune. Paris went mad, mad as her king in the forest of Le Mans. All day long frenzied bands, citizens and Burgundians together, roamed the streets,

seizing and slaying; all night the tocsin rang, rousing the maddened people to still wilder delirium. On the night of June 12th, 1418, they broke open the prisons and murdered their inmates without discrimination; Armagnacs, debtors, bishops, State and political prisoners, even some of their own party; a slash across the throat was the kindest death they met. Count Bernard of Armagnac was among the first victims: for days his naked body hung on view in the Palace of Justice, while in the streets the Paris children played with the stripped corpses of his followers. Private grudge or public grievance could be revenged by merely raising the cry of "Armagnac." A sword swept, and the score was wiped out. Between midnight of Saturday the twelfth and Monday the fourteenth of June (1418) sixteen hundred persons were massacred in the prisons and streets of Paris.

So fell the Armagnacs: and in their fall dragged their opponents with them.

Paris streets were full of unburied corpses; Paris gutters ran blood; Paris larders were bare of food. The surviving Armagnacs, assembled at Melun, kept supplies from entering the city on one side, the English on the other. Hunger and Plague, hand in hand, stalked through the dreadful streets. Soon fifty thousand bodies were lying there, with no sword in their vitals. Men said that those who had hand in the recent massacres died first, with cries of despair on their lips. While the city crouched terror-stricken, certain priests arose, proclaiming the need of still more bloodshed; the sacrifice was not complete, they cried. Two prisons still remained, the Grand Châtelet and the Bastille, crammed with prisoners; among them might be, doubtless