

THE NATIONAL HERO OF FRANCE:

JOAN OF ARC.

DEPICTED AND DESCRIBED BY BOUTET DE MONVEL.

No artist has treated more sympathetically than M. Boutet de Monvel the incidents of the life of Joan of Arc. It was a privilege to see recently, in his studio, the exquisite series of water-color designs in which he has depicted the career of the child-saint and warrior. It is at our request that the artist has undertaken to put into words his impressions of that marvelous career; the result being the brief paper herewith printed, portraying with the same sympathetic touch the leading incidents of Joan's life. The illustrations are reproductions of some of the original designs, printed in advance of their publication in France. The article has been translated for *THE CENTURY* by the American artist Will H. Low, a friend of Boutet de Monvel, and the writer of the article in *THE CENTURY* for June, 1894, descriptive of his work.—EDITOR.



HAVING undertaken to write a brief paper on Joan of Arc, I must at the outset plead for the indulgence due to a workman handling unaccustomed tools. Without pretension as a writer or historian, I shall simply endeavor to render the impression left upon me by the two years which I have spent face to face with our great national heroine.

The sentiment which in me dominates all others in the consideration of the life and career of Joan of Arc is one of wonder. I find there a sequence of occurrences which, outside of all questions of religious belief or faith, are equally and incontestably above or outside the laws of human possibility. It is as though a monument, resplendent in beauty and grandeur, were suddenly fashioned from a grain of sand.

To understand this phenomenal apparition, we must first consider the ruins from which it rose. Imagine France, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, a nation in an embryonic state, a confusion of provinces, a chaotic reunion of fiefs, in which rivalry, covetousness, and violence ran counter to one another. Added to the exhaustion caused by a century of conflict with the English, internecine quarrels were rife, and misery in the shape of hunger, cold, and disease claimed even more victims than the pitiless weapons of war. Sunken deep in this slough of despond, the unfortunate country was without hope of deliverance, lacking the energetic hand to guide, or the example of patriotic devotion to follow. On the one hand, the victorious English, possessing already half the kingdom,

joined to the advantage of powerful organization the prestige of fifteen years' uninterrupted success; on the other, a lost cause, demoralized soldiers deserting their arms, a powerless nobility whose only thought was to dispute jealously the remaining vestiges of royal favor, and for supreme hope a king without courage or will, dissipating in festivities the last resources drained from his remaining provinces. Renouncing all hope, the king, in fact, nourished the intention of escaping into Dauphiné, perhaps farther still over the Pyrenees into Spain, thus abandoning his kingdom, the rights which he claimed, and the duties which he had studiously evaded.

It was otherwise ordained. The nation, expiring under the heel of the oppressor, was to be saved; a hand was to lift her, to restore strength to her exhausted body and courage to her despairing heart.

To accomplish this task was needed a sturdy arm, a mind skilled to command, one of the great captains who at rare intervals in the world's history has appeared with much of the suddenness and all the force of a thunderbolt. There was needed a heroic soldier or an imperious prince—a soldier or a prince, as these alone at that time had the right to command or to act.

Once more it was otherwise ordained. In that class of the people who were as the beasts of the field, in a remote village of Lorraine, a girl of thirteen appeared. Tears were in her eyes; in the innermost parts of her being she had felt the quickening of a new birth unforeshadowed—the birth of patriotism. To her had come the archangel Michael

with the message of the "great pity which was for the kingdom of France." He had marked her forehead with the seal of her divine mission, and had said, "Thou shalt save France." "Messire," answered the child, "I am but a poor child of the fields; neither know I to mount a horse, nor yet to lead the men-at-arms." "God will aid thee," the angel had responded.

And the child believed. For five years she cherished in her heart this daring thought, living in the solitude of her secret, of which she spoke to none, not even to her confessor. At last, in her eighteenth year, the celestial voice brought the message, "Thine hour has come; thou must depart." Then this girl, timid, pious, and tender, left all that she loved; she set forth without looking back, guided by the superior power which led her on; she went, announcing to all that she was sent of the Lord God to save the kingdom of France.

The first to whom she bore this message was the Sire de Baudricourt. "The girl is mad," said he, and ordered her marched home to have her folly whipped out of her. But Joan insisted that she must be conducted to the presence of the king. "I will go," she pleaded, "if I wear my legs down to the knees." Her conviction was so strong that it gained the sympathy of the poor about her. To these humble beings, for whom everything is difficulty and impossibility in life, imagination opens a rich field where all dreams seem credible. They believed the dream of Joan, and lent their aid to the accomplishment of her miracle. This help and complicity of the people she was to find everywhere on her road. The king and the nobles accepted her because she served their purpose; the people believed in her and lent her their strength. Thus from the first step of her undertaking her situation was clearly outlined, as it was to be to the end—to martyrdom. The poor people gave from their poverty to buy her a horse and vestments of war, and a squire, Jean de Metz, won by the popular enthusiasm, offered to accompany her with a few men. They set out for Chinon, where the court was assembled. The way was long and beset with danger, but Joan upheld the courage of her companions. "Fear nothing," she said; "the Lord God has chosen my route; my brothers in paradise guide me on the way"; and in safety they arrived at Chinon. There new obstacles arose; it was difficult to obtain access to the king, jealously guarded from all outside influence by his favorite La Trémoille. But, as in a fairy-tale, doors were opened, walls fell

before her magic, and one evening the young peasant entered the great hall where, among the courtiers, disguised in a modest costume, stood the king, whom she had never seen. Without hesitation she walked straight to the king, and, falling on her knees, proffered her request with so much grace and ardor that Charles VII was moved.

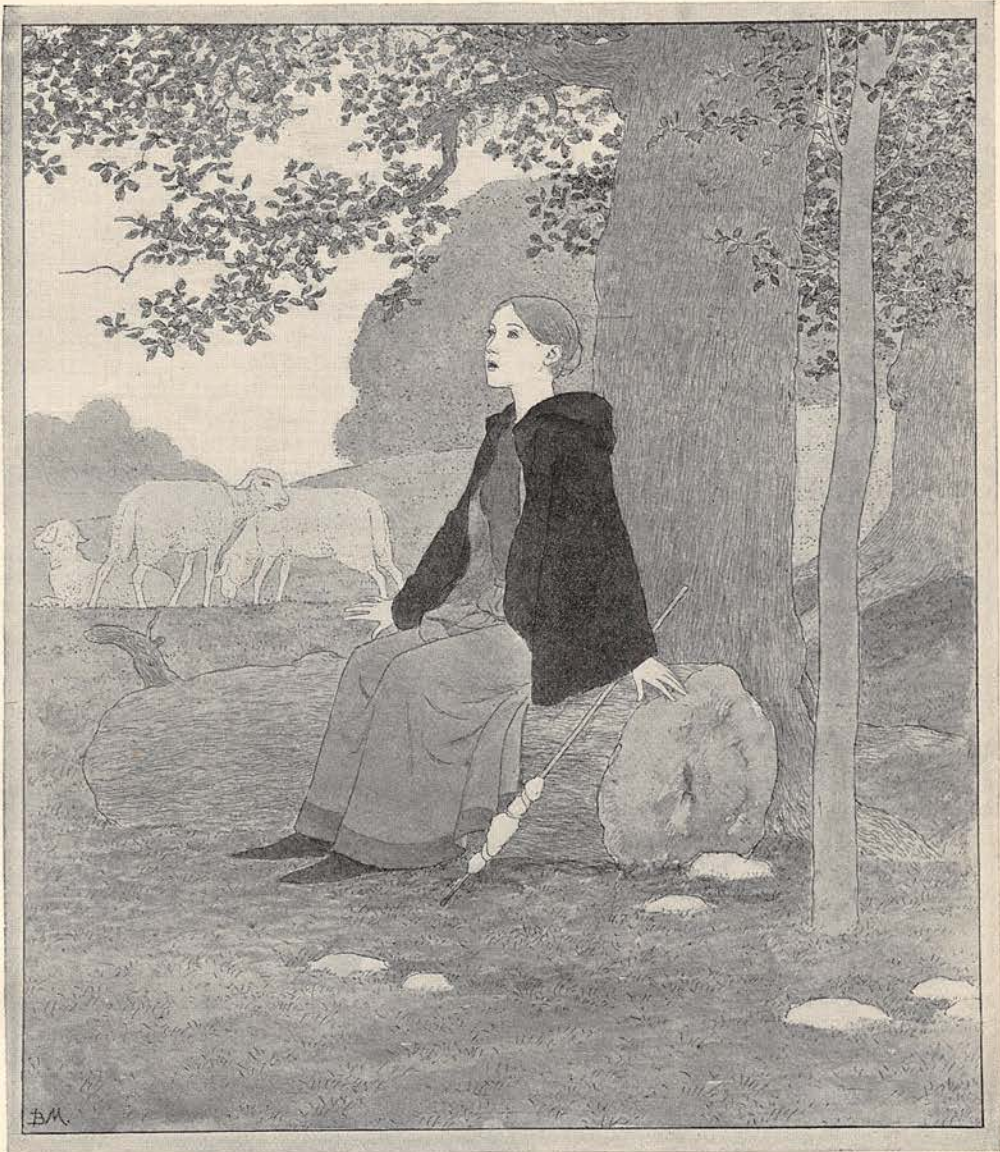
But imposture, witchcraft, even, was suspected, and before a decision was arrived at learned doctors and ecclesiastics were called on to examine her and scrutinize her conscience. To all the subtleties of her examiners she answered with so much simplicity, so much profundity of good sense, that they were confounded. "There is more in the book of God than in yours," she said; and added, "I know not *a* from *b*, but I am sent of the Lord God."

Meantime popular enthusiasm increased; the common people believed in her sanctity and the holiness of her mission. The court, in its distress, decided that, as a last resort, it was well to utilize this spontaneous aid. A small force was given to Joan, who, under the direction of experienced men of war, was assigned the task of delivering the city of Orléans, which for eight months had withstood the assaults of the English, but was on the point of succumbing.

Before us now opens a new chapter of this miraculous legend, difficult of belief were it not thoroughly substantiated. The simple girl, high-hearted and sincere, the young peasant who had led but sheep to pasture, was now to march at the head of men of war, and, amid the clash of arms, to become a consummate general.

In the campaign of France, the most admirable effort of his career, Napoleon, suddenly appearing on the field where his conscripts struggled against an overwhelming force, said proudly, "My presence here adds to the army a hundred thousand men." It was true, and the same might well be said of Joan; for to her army she was as the will is to brute force, as energy to inertia. And not only had she the moral effect upon her followers which is the mark of a great captain, but from the first the more practical qualities which are commonly the fruit of experience.

At this epoch, when the art of war was in a rudimentary state, when hazard was counted the chief element of success, Joan was to discover and practise strategic measures as new to her time as were those which gave Bonaparte victory over Austria at the time of the Italian campaign. First of the warriors of the



DRAWN BY BOUTET DE MONVEL.

JOAN HEARS THE VOICES.

She willingly drew away from her little comrades to meditate, and she heard celestial voices — "holy voices" she called them. With an exalted mind the child grew up, guarding in the depths of her heart the secret of her celestial conversations.

middle ages, Joan appreciated the advantages to be gained by reiterated attacks on an enemy already shaken and demoralized, without leaving him the time between action to recover and reorganize. And this was not the effect of happy accident; during the entire campaign, in every circumstance, she again and again gave proof of the superiority of her intelligence; and this despite all difficulties, in the face of the ill-will of her officers, — jealously indignant of being superseded by a

mere girl of low origin, — hampered by the indolence of the king, and carrying on her frail shoulders the weight of all decisions and the responsibility of all initiative effort. To the chiefs who sought to make decisions without consulting her she proudly asserted, « Hold your counsel together; I will hold mine with the Lord God, and his will prevail. » The ardor of her prayers moved at last the coward indolence of the king, and she succeeded in making him share her enthusiasm, warming

his cold heart at the fire which burned within her.

In battle her courage was peerless, and well it was that it was so, for each success was dearly bought, her indomitable energy alone inspiring her faint-hearted followers. When her troops threatened retreat, it was by throwing herself into the thickest of the fight, crying, "They are ours!" that she turned defeat to victory. Often wounded, she disdained the pain of her mangled flesh, and remained on the field as an example to her men. A gracious woman withal, her pity was even greater than her courage, braving and receiving blows, but never returning them. She had but one weapon, her banner, for her sword never left its scabbard. Later she was to say that she "loved her banner a thousand times more than her sword." At night, when the heat of battle was assuaged, her tears fell at the thought of the wounded and the dead. "I have never seen French blood shed without my hair standing on end," was one of her naïve utterances. The enemy commanded her pity as well, and she was as often seen assisting the dying English as her own people. Thus she was not only the mind which directs, she was likewise the heart filled with sympathy, the soul solicitous of the welfare of other souls, intuitively understanding that the soldier who fights the best is he whose heart is pure. In the same spirit she lightened the burden of the army by curtailing useless luggage, and she drove away the disreputable women who had followed the camp, and with them the debauchery and disorder which they had brought. On the other hand, she gently admonished her soldiers to clear their conscience, to be virtuous and religious as well as brave.

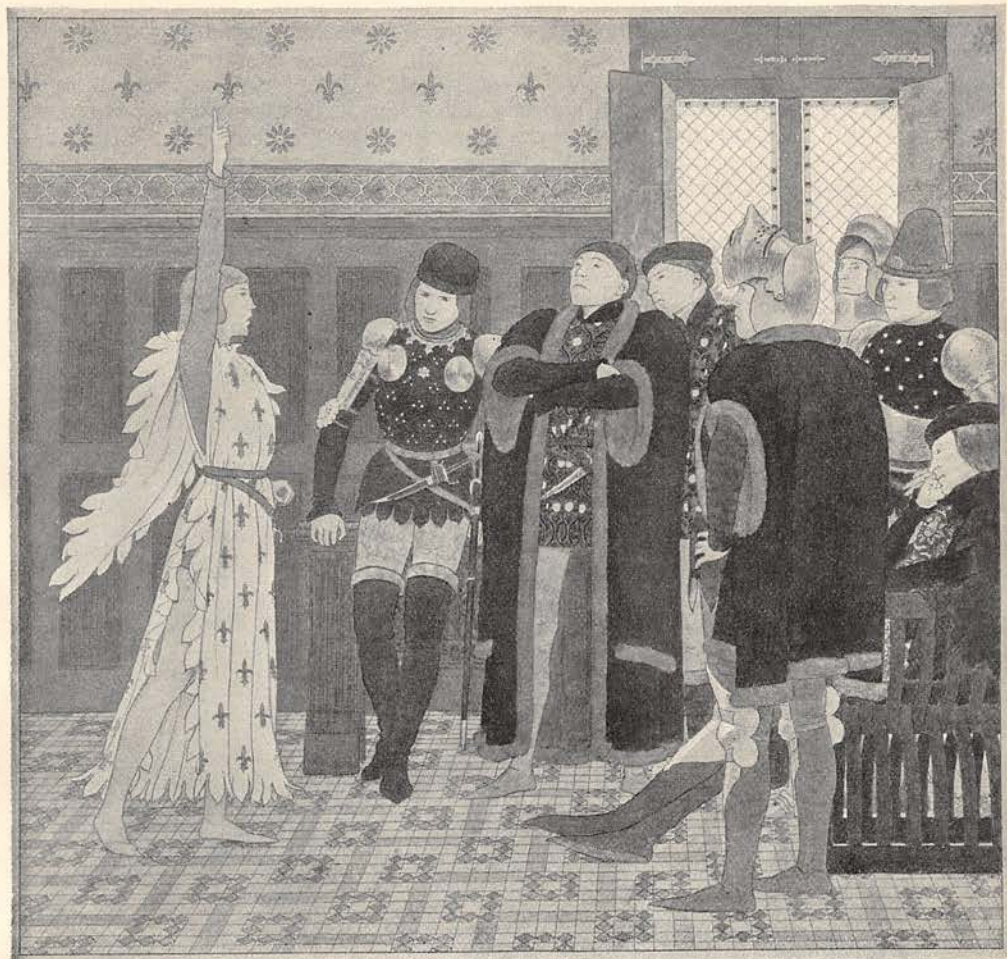
The influence she exercised on her surroundings, the prestige of her success, the idolatry of the people, never spoiled the charm of her simple nature. To the end she was the humble girl rendering to God the glory of each action. "I bring to you," was her message to the besieged citizens of Orléans, "the best aid of all—the aid of the King of heaven; it does not come to you through me, but from the Lord himself, who, moved by the prayers of St. Louis and Charlemagne, has taken pity on your city." Could any one keep in the background with more charming ingenuity?

Her religious faith was her chief support; inspired of God, she felt herself strong with the force which he lent her. In her ardent, steadfast, and regular piety, she had touching returns to the humility of her past life, wish-

ing to be informed of the day when beggars received communion, in order that she might share it with them. Her pity went broadcast to all suffering, but her love was reserved for the poor and disinherited; they were her brothers, among whom she had been born. The king could ennoble her, could give her squires, pages, and rich vestments, but never a breath of pride rose within her heart. Consequently her influence on the people was great, and wherever she passed, throngs of the lowly pressed about her. Men, women, and children, in their anxiety to approach, to kiss her hands or the hem of her garment, crowded so thickly that accidents occurred; those in the foremost row were pushed under her horse's feet. "She is holy," they exclaimed; and the belief that she could accomplish miracles grew apace. Strange legends sprang up: one had seen the holy band of archangels militant surrounding her in battle, and across the country swarms of white butterflies had been seen to follow her banner; the villagers who asked for arms with which to accompany her were directed to take the crosses from above the graves in the churchyards, and they turned to swords in their hands. She was in popular belief the virgin whose coming was foretold by rustic seers, and who was predestined to save the kingdom—perhaps an angel descended from paradise. Medals were struck bearing her effigy, and rude portraits of her were hung in village churches. Later, when, on trial for her life, her judges imputed to her as a crime this outpouring of popular enthusiasm, she humbly protested: "Many came to me, but they kissed my hands as little as I could help; the poor came to me because I did not repulse them." When reproached with having permitted this adulation of the people to assume the character of idolatry, she answered, "I might not, in truth, have escaped such sin had not God helped me," again rendering to divine power her sustaining modesty throughout the popular frenzy.

Although the scope of this study is too slight to permit their detailed narration, I must enumerate the principal events comprised between the date of Joan's arrival before Orléans, April 29, 1429, and the moment when she was taken prisoner at Compiègne, May 24, 1430.

The 29th of April Joan crossed the Loire before the city of Orléans. Lacking enough boats, her army was forced to return to Blois, whence, passing through the Beauce, they rejoined their leader before the city. On the morning of the 4th of May the little army entered Orléans, and in the afternoon the



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JOAN'S ENTRANCE INTO THE COUNCIL.

The chiefs of the army met at the house of the chancellor of the Duke of Orléans to deliberate on plans. Joan had not been asked to the meeting. Full of indignation, Joan entered. "You have held counsel among yourselves," said she; "I have held counsel with the Lord. Be sure that his will will be done, and that your plans will perish."

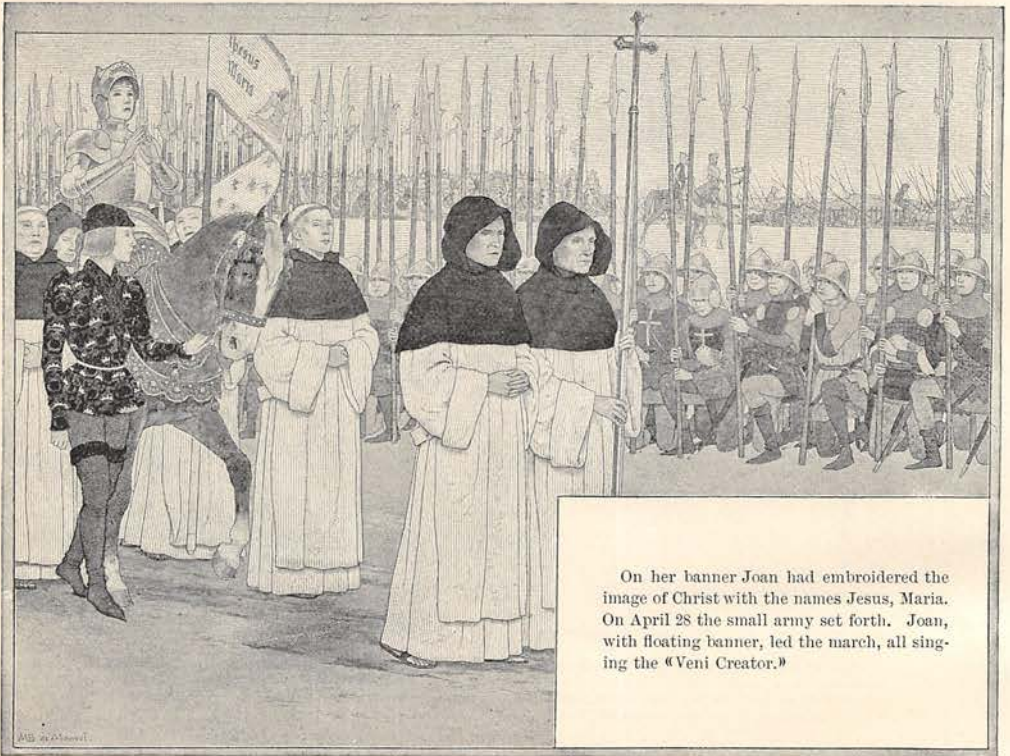
fort of St. Loup was captured. The next day was given up to prayer, repose, and preparations, and on the two following days the forts of the Augustins and the Tourelles were successively taken. On the 8th of May the English evacuated the remaining strongholds, and left the city, which, after having been in their possession for eight months, was thus recaptured in four days. In order to profit by the discomfiture of the English after their first defeat, Joan returned at once to Chinon, determined to take the king to Rheims, in order that his coronation might take place and fulfil the prophecy of the archangel. Charles VII hesitated. The country was still infested by the English, who were in force on the banks of the Loire, and Joan decided to

push them back in the direction of Paris before setting forth toward Rheims in the east. Her troops met at Selles; on the 11th of June they took the outlying faubourg, and the next day became masters of the city of Jargeau. On the 15th the French captured the bridge at Meung, and went on to Beaugency, which, attacked on the morrow, capitulated the next day. On the 18th Joan exterminated the English army led by Talbot to the rescue of Beaugency. The whole region was freed from the invader, and the moral effect of the rapidity with which Joan had achieved her second successful campaign was great. She returned at once to the king, determined at any cost to break the bonds of his apathy. The English had imprudently neglected to crown

their young king, and it was important to profit by their neglect, in order that Charles might be first in the field as the anointed king of France.

Ten days of entreaty at last decided Charles to move, and on the 29th of June the royal army set forth. On the way the cities opened their gates, and on the 16th of July the king entered his city of Rheims. The next day the ceremony of coronation took place. At the moment when Charles VII was anointed, Joan threw herself at his feet, kissing his knees, and with tears streaming down her cheeks

and by the demoralization of the English forces. The march toward Paris was one of triumph. Soissons and Laon opened their doors, and in turn Château-Thierry, Provins, Coulommiers, Crécy-en-Brie, Compiègne, and Beauvais welcomed their king. Joan, however, judged their progress too slow, though no effort of hers sufficed to accelerate the march, the indecision and indolence of the king acting as effectual obstacles to rapid and decisive action. At last, on the 23d of August, devoured by impatience, Joan left the main army, accompanied by the Duc d'Alençon and



On her banner Joan had embroidered the image of Christ with the names Jesus, Maria. On April 28 the small army set forth. Joan, with floating banner, led the march, all singing the «Veni Creator.»

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JOAN AT THE HEAD OF THE ARMY.

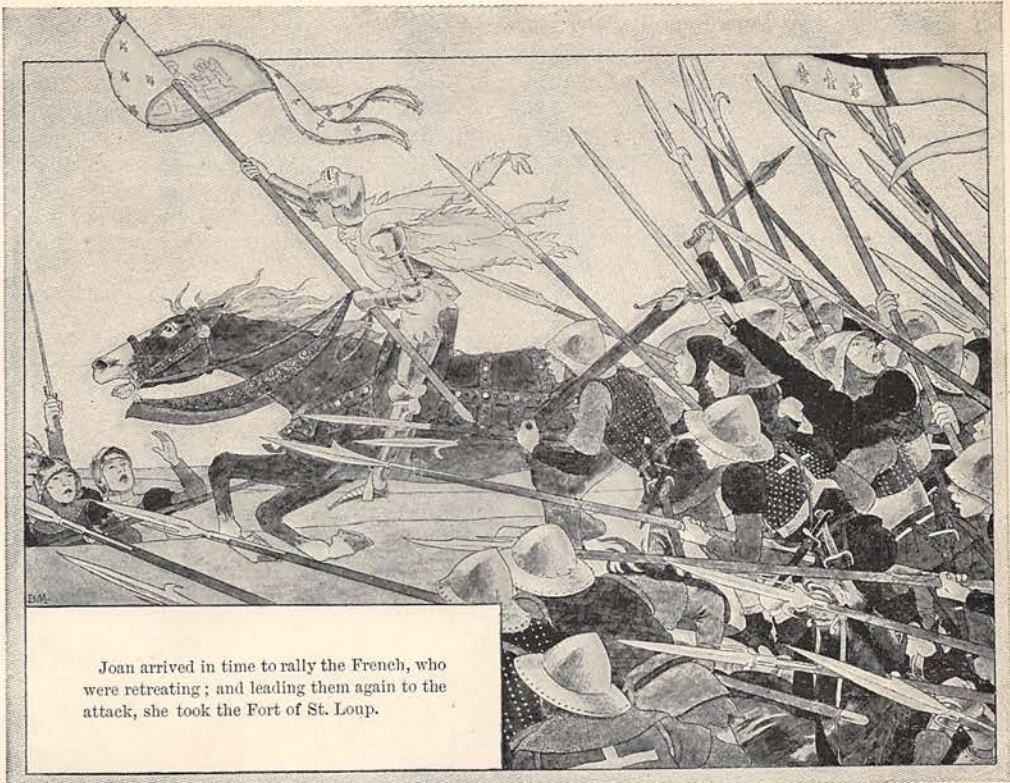
cried through her sobs, «O gentle king, now is done the pleasure of God, who willed that I should conduct you to your city of Rheims, there to receive your holy anointment, that all may know that you are the true king, and to you is the kingdom of France!»

Thus in less than three months the territory won by the English by years of conflict was freed. But Joan did not consider her mission at an end; she still desired to deliver Paris, the capital of her kingdom, into the hands of her king.

Faithful to her principles, she urged haste, desiring to profit by the popular enthusiasm

a strong body of men-at-arms, and marched toward Paris. Menaced with abandonment by the entire army, which wished to follow Joan, Charles decided at last to move.

It was already too late to surprise Paris, which had had ample time to prepare its defense. Nevertheless, Joan impetuously led a first assault, in which she was wounded by an arrow which pierced her thigh. Remaining on the field, she directed that the ditches surrounding the walls be filled to afford passage for her men, whom she encouraged to scale the walls. Unfortunately, night was falling; against her will she was forced on her horse,



Joan arrived in time to rally the French, who were retreating; and leading them again to the attack, she took the Fort of St. Loup.

DRAWN BY BOUTET DE MONVEL.

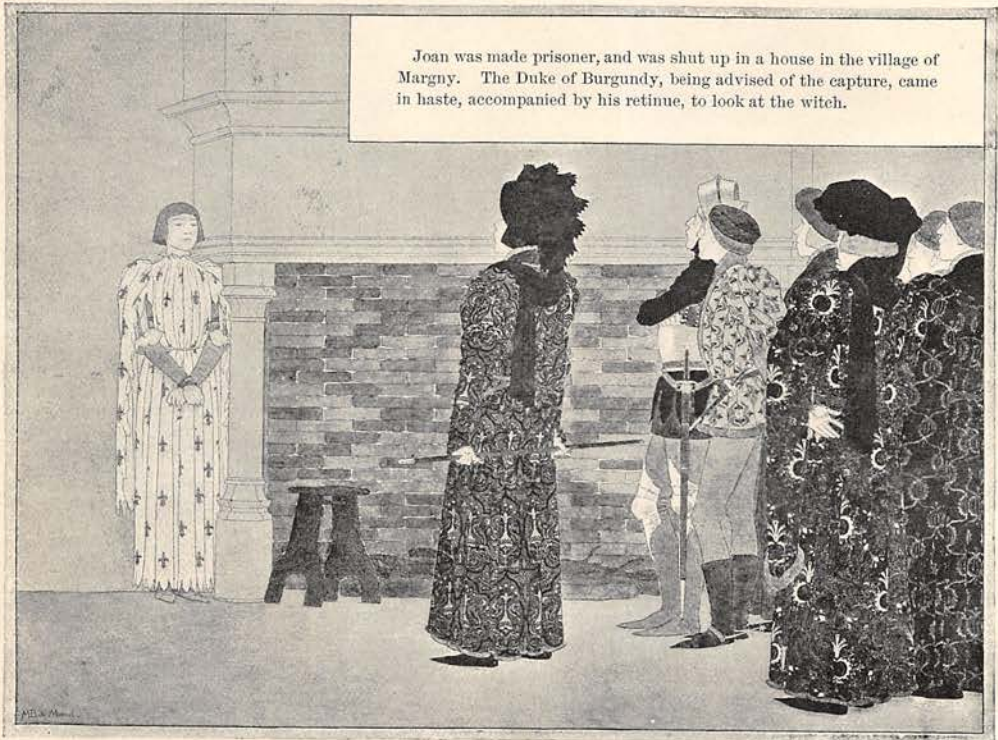
JOAN LEADS THE ATTACK AT ST. LOUP.

and the order given to retreat to La Chapelle. Early the next morning, despite her wound, Joan ordered the attack, assuring all that the city would capitulate; but Charles VII countermanded the order. He had been dragged about with his army long enough, and sighed for the luxurious ease of his castles on the Loire. He desired repose, and, deaf to all entreaty, ordered a retreat. This was not only a grave mistake from a military or political point of view: it was, above all, fatal to the ascendancy of Joan, who by it ceased to be considered invincible. She submitted meekly to her king, and the army retired slowly into Touraine, where it was disbanded. The court party, led by La Trémoille, had triumphed in suspending military operations and reducing Joan to inactivity. They were well content, for of a truth this peasant began to be of too great importance, and it was not difficult to bring the king, fatigued with the efforts which she had imposed on him, to their way of thinking. In November Joan succeeded in getting together a few soldiers, and at the head of her small force renewed the combat. St. Pierre le Moutier was first captured, and she then proceeded to lay siege to La Charité, but as it was

strong and well fortified, this proved too great a task. Her little army was without food and without aid, and, the king refusing to help her in any way, she was forced to retreat. Fretting under inaction, Joan at last left the court without permission, and in April, 1430, at Lagny-sur-Marne, associated herself with the predatory troops, who kept up a species of guerrilla warfare with the English. By a lucky stroke she made at once an important capture of one Franquet d'Arras, a Frenchman in the English service; and then learning that Compiègne was seriously menaced by the Burgundians and the English, she directed her troops to its support. At daybreak on May 24, 1430, she entered Compiègne. To the soldiers who accompanied her she added as many from the garrison as was prudent, and with this small force bravely attacked the Burgundians, hoping to defeat them, and then fall back on the English and disperse them in turn. At first she was successful, but the English, closing in, threatened to cut off her retreat, at which her troops murmured, and pressed her to regain the city. «Silence!» was her answer; «if you will, the day is ours; think only of what is before us.» But her brave spirit was over-

ruled, and a retreat was ordered. Forced to follow, she marched last and supported the retreat. The English succeeded in throwing their force to the base of the castle, whereat Guillaume de Flavy, fearing that they might enter the city, ordered the drawbridge raised. Joan, surrounded by the few men who were faithful to her, arriving at this moment, found entrance to the stronghold impossible. At

avowed desire of the court, or of certain members of it, is amply proved by the letter in which Regnault de Chartres, archbishop of Rheims, announces the capture of Joan to his diocese. Her defeat is presented as a direct judgment of God, "inasmuch as she would accept no advice, but acted according to her good pleasure, by which she had fallen into the sin of pride, and had not done that



DRAWN BY BOUTET DE MONVEL.

JOAN A PRISONER BEFORE THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY.

the foot of the walls in the moat five or six archers threw themselves upon her. «Surrender, and give us thy faith,» they demanded. «I have sworn my faith to another, and will keep my word,» was her reply, still struggling until they pulled her from her horse by the long skirt which she wore. Thus she was made prisoner by the soldiers of Jean de Luxembourg, while the governor of Compiègne, Guillaume de Flavy, witnessed the drama from his battlements without effort to save her.

The shame of his inaction stains his name indelibly, if, indeed, Joan's capture was not secretly planned. He was related to La Trémoille, and perhaps, like the king and his court, was not sorry to rid himself of too zealous a champion. That such was the un-

which the Lord had ordained.» This was the ingratitude, these were the calumnies, with which were rewarded her admirable devotion and incalculable services.

Joan was a prisoner; her martyrdom approached. As she had fallen into the hands of Jean de Luxembourg, a man of high birth but a soldier of fortune, ransom would not have been difficult; but to the eternal shame of the King of France, no effort was made, was even considered. The English ardently desired to lay hands on her; ten thousand *livres tournois* was the price put upon her head, and, securely guarded, she was carried in triumph to Rouen.

It was not only a personal vengeance which the English desired: in their eyes Joan represented the force of France. She was the

sorceress who struck their troops dumb with terror; once disposed of, victory would again be theirs. From their point of view, therefore, it was important to establish as a fact that the powers of darkness had lent their aid, to account for the course which events had taken.

To bring about this shameful end, it was necessary to find a judge devoted to this view and devoid of scruple. The man was ready at hand in the person of Cauchon, bishop of Beauvais. He assembled about him a certain number of ecclesiasts and doctors of the University of Paris, and in January, 1431, the trial of Joan began.

The poor girl, alone and abandoned by all, could oppose only her simplicity to the perfidious quibbles and outrageous insinuations of judges resolved to condemn her. She was condemned before trial, but what a triumphant defeat—the triumph of sincerity, of uprightness, of noble sentiment, and of delicate modesty! In the midst of so much ignominy her virtue shone with so bright a luster that a number of her judges, whose past vileness had been counted a guaranty of their servility, left the court in sheer disgust at the work imposed upon them.

The questions addressed to Joan, and her answers day by day, have been transmitted in the records of the court. To read them is to understand the brutal ferocity with which she was tortured, until, turning on her accuser, she cried, «You call yourself my judge; be careful what you do, for I am indeed sent by the Lord, and you place yourself in great danger.»

To answers almost sublime succeeded answers filled with naïve ingenuity. Questions were plied, traitorously conceived, concerning the visions which had come to her, and the celestial voices which she heard, and which throughout her mission had counseled and guided her. But on this point she was firmly silent. It was as though it were a secret which she was forbidden to betray. She consented to take an oath to speak nothing but the truth, but concerning her visions she made a reservation. «You could cut my head off before I would speak,» she protested. At night, in the darkness of her dungeon, St. Catherine and St. Margaret appeared to her, and celestial voices comforted her. She avowed that she had seen them «with the eyes of her body, . . . and when they leave me,» she added, «I wish that they would take me with them.»

«When St. Michael appears to you, is he naked?» asked the bishop.

«Do you think, then, that God cannot clothe his saints?»

«And your (voices) — what do they say to you?»

«That I answer you without fear.»

«What more?»

«I cannot tell all; I am more afraid to displease them than I am to answer you.»

Insisting, the judge asked:

«But is it displeasing to God to tell the truth, Joan?»

«My (voices) have told me certain things not for you, but for the king»; adding quickly, «Ah! if my king knew them, he would be more easy at dinner. I would like to go without mine till Easter if he could but know them.»

For her king, who had so cowardly abandoned her, she retained a passionate worship. He was the personification of France; he was her banner. One day during the trial Guillaume Everard accused the King of France of heresy, whereat, trembling with indignation, Joan cried out: «By my faith, sire, with all reverence due to you, I dare say and swear, under peril of my life, that he is the most Christian of all Christians, he who best loves the law and the church; he is not what you say.» In such a cry we feel that she uttered all her heroic soul.

She was asked if St. Catherine and St. Margaret loved the English.

«They love those whom the Lord loves, and hate those whom he hates.»

«Does the Lord hate the English?»

«Of the love or the hate of the Lord for the English I know nothing. I only know that they will be put out of France, save those who perish here.»

As she declared that she «had nothing done save by the grace of God,» the bishop asked her a perfidious and insidious question, one which no living being could truly answer:

«Joan, do you believe yourself in a state of grace?»

To say no was to avow herself unfit to be the instrument of divine power; to answer yes was to commit the mortal sin of pride—in a word, the sin which would put her outside of the pale of grace. She cut the Gordian knot with a simplicity most Christianlike.

«If I am not, please God may make me so; if I am, may God so keep me.»

The judges were disconcerted. Once more they touched upon sorcery; her standard, they pretended, must have been bewitched.

«No,» she answered simply; «I only said, (Go in among the English!) and I took it there.»

«But why was your banner carried into the

cathedral of Rheims, at the coronation, while those of other captains were stacked outside?)

«It had been in the thick of the fray; it was justice that it should be in the place of honor.»

She retained the garb of a man, and they shamed her, affecting to be ignorant of the fact that it was her best safeguard against the brutality of her jailers, who were with her day and night. For that matter, it was not

asked if she would accept the judgment of the church for all that she had said or done, and she answered that she «loved the church, and desired its support with all her heart, but for that which she had done she placed her confidence in the King of heaven, whose mission she had fulfilled»; adding, «in truth, our Lord and the church are but one.»

Then she was told that she must distinguish between the church triumphant—



Joan's judges had refused her all religious consolation. One day, on her way back from the seat of judgment, she knelt in front of a chapel door and prayed fervently.

DRAWN BY BOUTET DE MONVEL.

JOAN PRAYS AT THE CHAPEL DOOR.

alone these menials whom she had cause to dread: an English lord had attempted her dishonor, and when, after a desperate struggle, she had repulsed him, chained as she was to the wall of her dungeon, he had not hesitated to strike her. Hence, when her judges had insisted that she wear the costume of her sex, she had pleaded blushingly «that at least the skirt should be long.»

To condemn the saint as a sorceress seemed beyond their powers; the task was too monstrous; but in the armor of her mysticism there was perhaps a flaw where their weapon could penetrate. It might well be imputed a crime that she believed herself in direct communication with the powers above, without the intervention of the church. She was

God, the saints, and the souls redeemed—and the church militant—the pope, the bishops, and the clergy, enlightened by the Holy Ghost. Would she submit her case to the church militant?

«I am come of God, of the Virgin Mary, of the saints, and the victorious church of heaven; to that church I submit all, myself and my actions, all that I have done or yet may do.» How could this girl, whose heart was pure and simple, who had lived with her eyes fixed on heaven, stoop to the distinctions of narrow theologians? On this point she was firm, though they pressed her close. «I submit to the church militant,» she pleaded, «if it does not ask the impossible, our Lord God's service coming first.»

When reproached with heresy, she protested, «I am a good Christian; I have been baptized, and will die a good Christian.»

The trial was too long to suit the English; their impatience became more and more marked. «Priests, you are not earning your money!» was the shout when the court rose. More haste was demanded of their servility. But the ignominy of the judges and executioners gave good measure. Joan was condemned as a heretic, backslider, apostate, and idolatress. May 30, 1431, she was burned at the stake on the place of the Old Market at Rouen. «Bishop, I die by your hand,» she said to the Bishop of Beauvais, as she mounted the funeral pyre, and she died murmuring the name of Jesus.

Her death was so touching that her judges and executioners wept, and the English present fled, crying loudly, «We are lost; we have burned a saint!»

Such is the summary recital of the brief apparition of Joan of Arc in the dark history of her epoch, a gleam of daybreak through the night of brutality and violence of the middle ages. For us—Frenchmen—Joan of Arc is the most perfect figure of our history, the one altar before which men of all opinions bend the knee, the patron saint of our country. If we look with the eye of reason on this miracle of virtues, of grace, and of gifts suddenly revealed in the being of a simple peasant girl, and bursting forth into actions so extraordinary, and if we search for an explanation, we must consider that the country was crazed by misery and suffering, and fallen to such a depth of distress that nothing but supernatural aid seemed able to save it. It was enfeebled to a point favorable to every hallucination. Joan had grown up in this environment; she had suffered with the suffering about her; the soul of her people vibrated within her; and when the angel appeared, the child could but give herself to the dream which was thus brought to her. And the people followed her, believing as she believed. The child was of the elect, her soul open to all pity, to all devotion, to all enthusiasms; and these virtues, which would have remained hidden in the obscurity of her humble life, flourished and became resplendent in the bright daylight of her larger existence. In the shock of succeeding events her virtues became more exalted, became purified to the degree of absolute perfection. The saint becomes a hero, an immaculate hero. There are those who scoff at the visions; but what to us is the question of their reality? One thing is undoubted—to her they

were real. It is true that she was exalted, was mystical; but her mysticism was militant; it was realized in the sphere of human actions and human interests. Her exaltation modified in no degree the fine equilibrium of health; on the contrary, it developed in her the active qualities, her admirable common sense, her quickness of thought and action. With her there is no suspicion of fevered thought; all her acts and all her words are redolent with the grace of calm simplicity. At times she speaks as though by divine inspiration, and in certain of her responses to her judges at Rouen we imagine we hear the voice of the child Jesus when he confounded the doctors in the temple.

To close, I must endeavor, after having tried to render the moral side of our national heroine, to give an idea of what I imagine may have been her appearance as she walked this earth.

While at work on my series of designs, I have often been asked to describe my conception of the personal appearance of Joan of Arc. At this question I have always seen before me a figure which little by little has grown more distinct, until now it is as though I saw Joan, to use her own words, «with the eyes of my body.» Of actual evidence nothing remains; no portrait exists, nor has there come down to us the smallest shred of her vestments or fragment of her arms. We know that she was tall and well proportioned, that her physiognomy was agreeable; but all this is vague. Some have it that she was fair, others that she was dark. Her hair was, in all probability, neither the one nor the other, but of a shade between the two, which would account for the difference of opinion. To me she must have been somewhat fair, as thus she seems more feminine. Judith had black hair; Jeanne Hachette, who from the ramparts opposed the enemy with her battle-ax, was dark; but Joan of Arc had such a tender breast, so much pity—I find in her so much of womanly grace in contrast with her decision in the hour of action—that I can see her only blonde: not the blonde of the fair-haired races of the North, but the blonde chestnut of our France. She was not in any sense *pretty*; we must not forget that warlike companions, men not overburdened with scruples, testified that she never inspired the thought of gallantry. If not pretty, however, she had probably the beauty of the peasant: a firmly, well constructed head; her eyes were bluish gray, not too light, for they flashed fire at times; her nose was somewhat heavy, but with sensitive nostrils; and her mouth strongly marked, with

full red lips. Her complexion was browned by exposure, rich and healthy in color; her carriage free and somewhat boyish, for she was a girl of the fields, free as air, and her limbs were vigorous, and her chest was deep. She never knew fatigue, say the chronicles of her time. We know that she was tall and well proportioned, but although tall for a woman, she seemed small, when dressed as a man, in comparison with her soldiers. For the same reason her strong features were by comparison delicate, and her boyish carriage became more womanly when her figure was incased in armor. Side by side with the brutal sol-

diers she appeared feeble and delicate. Her force, then, was entirely moral, and art must preserve for her this character, though without exaggeration. The danger of presenting a creature bloodless or hysterical must be avoided. She must be able to act not for a mere instant, under the influence of momentary nervous exaltation, but continuously, with the rhythmic regularity of a well-constituted body. No; she was not what is ordinarily termed beautiful, but she became so at certain moments—beautiful with the beauty of a soul which was noble and true.

Maurice Boutet de Monvel.

THE WHITE SPIDER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWO RUNAWAYS."



It is absurd! There never was a ghost!" The statement, emphatic, almost petulant, came from the lips of a girl.

"Edith, my dear, you can be positive without discourtesy." The grandmother's voice was courtesy itself.

"But not so charming, grandmother. When Edith is positively discourteous she is superb."

"Gallantry from my brother! Think of it! But thanks, Tom, if you are in earnest." He sat on the steps, and blew a smoke circle into the soft autumn evening, and looked lazily through it at the full moon mounting in the eastern sky.

"Never more so in my life, sis. But about ghosts?"

"Ask mama."

"I have never seen one," said the placid little lady appealed to; "but the testimony of the Scriptures is certainly in favor of the proposition that disembodied spirits have appeared on earth."

Several couples promenading the white-columned porch paused, their attention arrested by the theme. The discussion grew animated.

"Professor," said Tom, with his drawl, and the easy familiarity of a lifelong acquaintance, "you have just about time to make your escape. It is coming."

The professor, sitting near the Madeira-vine, had fallen into a reverie. His friend and host next to him, availing himself of the privilege of age and wearied with evolution into

which the learned guest had wandered, was sleeping peacefully in the white oak rocker.

"What is coming, Tom?" The professor returned smilingly to the present.

"Ghost-story! But perhaps you believe in ghosts too."

"Well, yes; perhaps so."

"Oho! Seen any?"

"Yes; at least I have seen one!"

"Oh, professor!" This shout was followed by a rush of feet and a clatter of chairs drawn near; then by a general laugh. It had all been comically sudden. No one ever knew where the professor was going to begin in a subject, and as usual he took all by surprise.

"I am afraid you have frightened my little friend out there, or perhaps it is Tom's smoke annoys him. There, he is at work again."

All eyes followed the direction of the speaker's gaze. The angle of the moon's rays was just right to bring into view the wonderful web of the wood-spider, so called, a four-pointed star eight or ten feet in diameter, with concentric circles spun in the center, the star-points resting on rays of cedar and madeira and a trellis corner. Each strand was a silver cable wet with dew. It shone against the Georgian sky like diamond tracings upon a window-pane. The tiny artist was distinctly visible as he began to hurry about, strengthening his structure with guys, and building with a confident intelligence too subtle for analysis.

"I was thinking about my ghost and watching yonder little fellow before the ex-