

splendors and silences of the free forest.

The forest is a wealth, a decoration, a poem: All over the land of France,

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we must give it our thanks and our most active attention, in our own interest and out of gratitude and dignity.

## SAINT JOAN OF ARC

BY L. WHEATON

If the French, in mid-war, promised a Church, worthy of her, in honor of the Blessed Jeanne d'Arc, should the Allied cause be victorious, then the promise remains to be redeemed. Throughout the terrible struggle on the Western Front there has been a continual subconscious sense of the Maid's presence and mission. The martyrdom of Rheims (the scene of her brief earthly glory), the memory of that old fight for the liberation of France in which she figured so simply and so splendidly, these and other associations have touched the imagination of even her ancient foes, and as an English regiment filed past her statue, on entering a French town, man after man saluted it with a chivalrous 'Pardon, Jeanne!' In the realm of literature, too, the English have already amply atoned for their very natural part in the Maid's tragedy, for Jeanne has had her admirers and defenders among men of letters in both England and America for a good century.

In the last decade or two of years, we have had lives of St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard, St. Teresa, St. Catherine of Siena, St. Francis Xavier, by writers who too evidently are outside the atmosphere of their subjects. It is impossible for our saints to be under-

stood by those who have not shared in their fullness of life, who have not known Christ in the breaking of bread. The bare facts may be carefully accurate, but the interpretation is often far afield, and the letter killeth, where the spirit quickeneth not. In the case of Jeanne, however, the true artist has his own privilege. He has been allowed to look, if not to live, within that sacred inner sanctuary where saints are fashioned, and to apprehend with the poet's instinct what the mere scholar may miss. 'Two strong angels stand by the side of history,' writes Jeanne's first Protestant apologist, De Quincey, 'as heraldic supporters; the angel of research on the left hand that must read millions of dusty parchments blotted with lies; and the angel of meditation on the right hand that must cleanse those lying records with fire and must quicken them with regenerate life.' More than 'two angels of meditation,' by a strange irony of history, have appeared in the English-speaking world to interpret this shining figure, sometimes, it would seem, disparaged and misunderstood by certain academic judges in her own country:

But that is the modern method [writes Mr. Chesterton, of Anatole France's

*Jeanne d'Arc*, the method of the reverent skeptic. When you find a life entirely incredible and incomprehensible from the outside, you pretend that you understand the inside. M. France read M. France's nature into Joan of Arc—all the cold kindness, all the homeless sentimentalism of the modern literary man. . . . As Anatole France, on his own intellectual principle, cannot believe in what Joan of Arc did, he professes to be her dearest friend and to know exactly what she meant. I cannot feel it to be a very rational way of writing history, and sooner or later we shall have to find some more solid way of dealing with those spiritual phenomena with which all history is as closely spotted and spangled as the sky is with stars. Joan of Arc is a wild and wonderful thing enough, but she is much more sane than most of her critics and biographers. We shall not recover the common sense of Joan until we have recovered her mysticism. . . . Her war succeeded because it began with something wild and perfect—the saints delivering France. She put her idealism in the right place, and her realism also in the right place; we moderns get both misplaced. She put her dream and her sentiments into her aims where they ought to be; she put her practicality into her practice. . . . Our dreams, our aims, are always, we insist, quite practical. It is our practice that is dreaming. It is not for us to interpret this flaming figure in the terms of our tired and querulous culture. Rather we must try to explain ourselves by the blaze of such fixed stars.

Andrew Lang was one of the most industrious of Jeanne's defenders. Apart from his chivalrous tribute to her in that enthusiastic fantasy, *A Monk of Fife*, he has spared no pains in his research for authority to prove her innocent heroism, and he adds his evidence to her character as a child of the Church: 'There is no basis for the Protestant idea that Jeanne was a premature believer in Free Thought and the liberty of private opinion. She was as sound a Catholic as a man or woman could be in matters of faith; she was only forced by injustice into maintaining her freedom in matters of fact, of personal experience.'

Although sculpture and painting have been pressed into the service of the Maid, there has been a certain dissatisfying unreality in most of these achievements. One of the countrymen of the Maid of Lorraine, impatient at the fancy of idealized statues and pictures of the peasant girl, boasted that he would paint a true Jeanne. In the Metropolitan Museum of New York hangs the famous painting by Bastien-Lepage which is not only a faithful portrait by one who understood his subject, but which is a curiously interpretative work of art. In its details the work may be unpleasing to one not in sympathy with the extreme impressionist manner, but the central figure compensates for any artistic annoyance and is to me a revelation. It somehow explains Jeanne. She is essentially a peasant, strong-boned, awkward perhaps; the wrists are thick, and there is a hint of thick ankles under the heavy homespun skirt. A bodice is crookedly laced over a coarse white chemisette and the entire figure, clumsy but modest, breathes the very spirit of toil. Above the firm column of neck is the fine outline of jaw, a strong, sweet mouth—good sensible features all; but over these and under the wide brow, from which the hair is carelessly drawn back into an ungraceful knot, is the essence and meaning of herself and her mission, the wonderful vision of the eyes. Just as Leonardo's sphinx-like Lady Lisa seems to draw all outward life into the dim recesses of her own observant mind, and throw the picture of it into her enigmatic smile, so, in contrast, this simple child of the soil looks quite out of herself into the region of things spiritual, unworldly and eternal. On her innocent soul the divine inspiration falls unimpeded by mists of self and sin. To her attentive ear come the whisperings of those voices which were the

messengers of the divine will. It would be impossible to describe the peculiar self-detached attitude or to exaggerate the luminous clarity which Lepage has put into the eyes. They are not especially beautiful eyes — pale, wide, with no effects of shadows or any touch of earth to enhance them, they hold, nevertheless, the expression which we recognize as that of an elect and virginal soul. The whole figure seems to radiate innocence. It embodies in color what De Quincey so reverently painted in words:

The poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that, like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa, rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration rooted deep in pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings. . . . She was a girl of natural piety that saw God in forests and hills and fountains, but did not the less seek Him in chapels and consecrated oratories. The peasant girl was self-educated through her own natural meditateness. . . . It is not necessary to the honor of Joan, nor is there in this place room to pursue her brief career of action. That, though wonderful, forms the earthly part of her story; the spiritual part is the saintly passion of her imprisonment, trial, and execution.

It would seem as if this strange little northern champion\* of the Blessed Maid had, with Catholic and prophetic instinct, beatified her unofficially in his own musings. Even to those who ignore the religious inspiration of her mission, how unique and wonderful must be her position in history! There has just been Agincourt and its splendid hero, and the thrilling lines of Shakespeare's 'O God of battles, steel my soldiers' hearts,' stir in memory at the mere mention of the name. There has been the overwhelming triumph, the humiliating Treaty of Troyes, the fleur-de-lys quartered with the English arms —

\* My very own Thomas de Quincey.' — *Francis Thompson*.

and then, opposed to the heroic figure of Henry V, the humble peasant of Domrémy, keeping her father's sheep and spinning her mother's flax, and leading a life of piety and toil; then suddenly appearing at the head of an army and leading men to certain victory and the coronation of their rightful King, when this child was only seventeen. The brain reels at the swift miracle of it all — nor must we be too hard on the angry enemies who called her sorceress for such magical success. It is like a tale of impossible adventure, yet very simple and human is the Maid in the midst of it, making the history of her military tactics and acute knowledge of situations all the more striking.

It is worth while to quote in this connection part of the account of the taking of Les Tourelles as described in Andrew Lang's *Maid of France*. It helps us to enter into the wonder of the thing, and in the light of recent events we are now more keenly interested in this strange, quick campaign, with its strategy, its swift assault, its restrained waitings, the order and discipline of it all, under the leadership of an unlettered country girl. We read in an earlier chapter that 'The Maid always bore her standard when in action, that she might strike no man with the sword. She never slew any man with the sword.' The taking of Les Tourelles she acknowledges 'gave me much more to do, more than I ever had yet':

At sunrise on May 7th, Jeanne heard Mass. The attack began early in the morning . . . and well the English fought, for the French were scaling at once in different places, in thick swarms, attacking on the highest part of their walls, with such hardihood and valor that to see them you would have thought they deemed themselves immortal. But the English drove them back many times and tumbled them from high to low, fighting with bow-shot and gunpowder, with axes, lances, bills,

and leaden maces, and even with their fists. . . . Ladders were rising, men were climbing them; the ladders were overthrown, or the climbers were shot, or smitten, or grappled with and dashed into the fosse; while the air whirled to the flight of arrows and bolts, and the smoke rose sulphurous from the mouths of guns. The Standard of the Maid floated hard by the wall till, about noonday, a bolt or arrow pierced her shoulder plate as she climbed the first ladder, and the point passed clean through the armor and body, standing out a hand's breadth behind. She shrank and wept, says her confessor. Probably her place in the front rank was not long empty. There she stood under her banner and cried on her French and Scots; but they were weary and the sun fell, and men who had said that 'in a month that fort could scarce be taken,' lost heart as the lights of Orleans began to reflect themselves in the waters of the Loire. . . . 'Doubt not; the place is ours,' called the clear, girlish voice. But Dunois held that there was no hope of victory this day; and he had to sound the recall, and gave orders to withdraw across the river to the city. . . . 'But, then' continues Dunois 'the Maid came to me, and asked me to wait yet a little while.' Then she mounted her horse and went alone into a vineyard, some way from the throng of men, and in that vineyard she abode in prayer for about a quarter of an hour. Then she came back, and straightway took her standard into her hands and planted it on the edge of the fosse. . . . The English, seeing the wounded witch again where she had stood from early morning, 'shuddered, and fear fell upon them,' says Dunois. His language is Homeric.

Then follows the stirring recital of the onslaught, upon the command of the Maid to enter; the complete victory of the French, the loss to a man of the sturdy English who fell into the moat and were drowned by the weight of their heavy armor:

Steel, fire, water had conspired against them. Jeanne saw this last horror of the fight. She knelt, weeping and praying for her enemies and insulters. The joy bells of Orleans sounded across the dark Loire, lit with red flames. . . . She had kept her word, she had shown her sign, and the tide of English arms never again surged so far

as the City of St. Arguan. The victory, her companions in arms attest, was all her own. They had despaired, they were in retreat, when she, bitterly wounded as she was, recalled them to the charge. Within less than a week of her first day under fire the girl of seventeen had done what Wolfe did on the heights of Abraham, what Bruce did at Bannockburn. She had gained one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world.

Some features of the conflict now past, and crowned with a victory almost undreamed of in its terrific completeness, recall that other heroic epoch of French history in some of its spiritual aspects. At the first Battle of the Marne, Kitchener was heard to exclaim: 'Someone has been praying.' Was it the intercession of those exiled nuns driven from France to the kindly shores of England which helped to gain that first strange victory in the beloved country from which they were torn but not estranged? Is it perhaps England's hospitality to these consecrated ones which won her a welcome in Bethlehem on the Christmas Day of 1917, when all was dark, and the taking of Jerusalem came to the Allies like a smile of God in the night? In the perspective of events since the French Revolution, this might easily be so. In any case, the English warriors had many a grateful beadsman of whose existence they were ignorant.

But although prayer was deep in the hearts of the people and made the background of every passing victory or escape from imminent danger, anyone who followed attentively the outward currents of life, and who could notice, for instance, the tone of the English press as the public expression of feeling, could not but be struck by the absence of all *creaturely* attitude. Self-reliance, human courage, a belief in British integrity and ultimate invincibility — and then when the black moment came the heroic effort

to meet the need by sheer grit — all these were splendid exhibitions of national and natural virtue. But there was never a word about our dependence upon God. Then suddenly there came a change, welcome to those who had long and anxiously looked for it. Column after column appeared in the daily papers of appeals for prayer, of reminders of our human limitations and conditions, of our powerlessness without the Divine assistance. And the country responded with an almost audible sigh of relief. There ensued not a day of appointed prayer, but an atmosphere of prayer, and a distinct attitude of dependence.

And attitude makes all the difference. It would seem as if this was what was wanting, for as soon as the note of the Miserere was struck in public utterance, help came in a signal and unmistakable way. The Man of the Hour, the darkest hour in European history, stood suddenly revealed, and by universal consent was appointed to the supreme command of the Allied Armies; chosen by men because of his unique military genius, but divinely predestined to be the savior of his country because he was humble enough and simple enough to bear his almost miraculous success without taking God's glory for his own. A man of prayer, a daily communicant, a soldier whose Catholic principle had been more to him than any worldly promotion, he stood aside from himself and let God live and work through him, and the end was achieved with the magnificence that belongs to all God's unimpeded workings. In the accomplishment of that end let us grant the full meed of praise to the heroic sacrifices of four years of strain and persistence. Human valor held the seas and defended threatened territory with an enduring determination beyond all measure. But just as

in the time of Jeanne there came a crisis when it seemed as if France were lost to her own children and in that awful moment deliverance came, so in the tense months of suspense between the collapse of Russia and the coming of United States troops, when England was spent with her superhuman effort and France was bleeding to death, when the German hordes were pouring in from the East to the Western Front, when to those who could not still hope and believe, all seemed lost, in that hour of possible catastrophe, the Allies realized the meaning of those words of the great Marshal Foch: 'Prayer has saved the Allies before in this deadly struggle and it will save them again.'

In this war of high averages, where most men are heroes and all are brave, one asks what it is that has raised this officer to such undisputed and ungrudged eminence and ascendancy? For Foch does not seem to challenge jealousy. There is but one title to such unique prestige as his: it is the supernatural character of the man, his spiritual dominance, his detachment. On the face of history it will be written that the superb strategy of the Generalissimo saved the final situation, but on the lips and deep in the heart of this humble instrument of the Divine Will are other words, those that show the right to conquest: *Non nobis Domine non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*. And even before the splendid reinforcement in men and spirit that came in a wave of enthusiasm from the New World, the victory of the Allies was assured. All the rest counted and helped, but the turn of the tide was due to the supernatural. Once more the motto of France's deliverance was that of the Maid, *De Par le Roy du Ciel*.

And so, too, the explanation of Jeanne is simple enough. God intended France to be, not a vassal, but a country



complete in herself and He chose a selfless instrument for the most difficult part in the accomplishment of this design. Power is made perfect in infirmity; and in the unspoiled grace of her meek and radiant girlhood there was no impediment to the Divine Will. She knew her place, her work was official, and if there had not been the burning at Rouen, there would have begun again the old shepherdess life at Domrémy. The storming of a citadel and the keeping of her father's sheep were equally in the day's work of God's appointment. She might have shirked the difficult task. She certainly had her natural shrinkings, but there was in her something stronger than herself. That gentle girl was a very shrine of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. She is only hard to understand because her life is on supernatural lines from first to last, while her soft natural girlishness reminds us how human a thing and feminine Jeanne was. And so prompted by the divine inspiration she accepted her difficult mission — the toil of it, the passing glory of it, the ensuing shame and pain of it, and the final consummation of her poor earthly frame. How splendid in the perspective of history is the pathetic figure in the dreadful burning! Who would have it otherwise? Theology and art accept it as the apotheosis of the Maid, the glorious failure of the earthly part. Throughout her dramatic career there was never a moment's pose or pretense. What faults she committed were never of pride, but of some passing timidity or weakness, in short, wild hunted moments, like the leaping from the Tower of Beaufort, and that wearied assent to her persecutors after she had plaintively begged for the Life-giving Sacrament and had been refused its strength. She was ever human and we love to think of her, not riding triumphantly across the

bridge at Orleans, or standing with her victorious banner beside the crowned King at Rheims, but crying meekly from her throne of smoke and flame, 'Jesus! Jesus!' forgiving those who indeed knew not what they did, gentle and feminine to the last.

And since her solemn Beatification in 1909, we may not sit in judgment on her even if we would. The Maid has sustained the ordeal of her last earthly tribunal and is beyond the reach of speculation. She is authoritatively declared to have passed from the Church Militant (and such indeed it was to her) to the Church Triumphant. But even now in this later hour of victory, her work is not completed. It is time for her to look again to the lilies of France in the hearts of her young children; to enthrone another King, not in the ancient seat of earthly sovereigns, blighted and blasted in this fearful war, but in the ranks of all who hail as Mother her who is the eldest daughter of the Church. Look to your fleur-de-lys even now, holy Jeanne, in this hour of France's earthly triumph!

It is indeed part of her unfinished work to bring back to the government of Christian-hearted France her old inheritance of faith. If the fruit of temporal blessings was garnered in her own time and is ready for garnering now, surely there is a richer spiritual harvest at hand for her country's greater need. That death was rich enough in pain for plentiful grain, for never was martyrdom more prolonged and forlorn. Her dereliction was piteous indeed. The desolation of misunderstanding, the maidenly quiverings from protracted insult, the weary waiting in captivity of this child of air and sun and freedom, the human dread of torture and death; the unutterable longing for the sacraments

which were denied her in her character as witch; the vague alarm and suspense, the darkness of it and its nameless horrors encompassed her with a cloud of terror. But the anguish had its hour, and when at last the Bread of Life was given her, she arose, strong in the memory of another Passion, and

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went forth in meek submission to meet her flaming death. That was her fitting end. There was more of fire than earth in Jeanne — for her there was to be no slow decay, no humiliating dissolution. From the charred and tortured body the heroic spirit issued, flame from flame.

## THROUGH THE KIEL CANAL IN THE HERCULES

BY LEWIS B. FREEMAN

THE Hercules and her four escorting destroyers (the latter having been scattered during the last few days to various ports and air stations in connection with the inspection being pushed along all the German North Sea coast) were to have rendezvoused at Brünsbützel by dark on December 10, in order to be ready to start through the Kiel Canal at daybreak the following morning. At the appointed time, however, only the Viceroy (which had pushed through that morning with the 'air' party on its way to the Zeppelin station at Tondern) was on hand. The Hercules, which had got under way from Wilhelmshaven during the forenoon, reported that she had been compelled to anchor off the Elbe estuary on account of the fog, and the Verdun, coming on from her visits to Borkum and Heligoland, had been delayed from a similar cause. The Vidette and Venetia, which were helping the 'shipping' and 'warship' parties get around the harbors of Bremen and Hamburg, signaled that their work was still incomplete, and they would have to proceed later to Kiel 'on their own.'

Returning to Brünsbützel from the Tondern visit well along toward midnight, the absence of the Hercules compelled the four of us who had made that arduous journey to put up in the Viceroy (the accommodations in the 'V's' appear to be as elastic as the good nature of their officers is elastic), and the impossibility of rejoining our own ships in the morning was responsible for the fact that we continued with her — the first British destroyer to pass through the Kaiser Wilhelm Canal — on to Kiel. It was a passage as memorable as historic.

An improving visibility toward morning enabled the Hercules to get under way again before daybreak, and in the first gray light of the winter dawn she came nosing past us and on up to the entrance of the canal. At each end of the latter there are two locks — lying side by side — for both 'outgoing' and 'incoming' ships. The right side one of the 'incoming' pair had been reserved for the Hercules, while the other was kept clear for the Regensburg — flying Admiral Goette's flag — and the two British destroyers.