

THE WITCH

the country that had always seemed to them a very fair country — that seemed so still. The wind had fallen. They rode side by side. Those that guarded them were tired with the long day and its various excitements. These rode in silence or talked among themselves in voices somewhat subdued, and for a time let the prisoners go unmarked. When they came within sight of the town it would be different. Then all would straighten in their saddles and closely surround the two, assuming the proper air of vigilance. But now they allowed them to ride side by side and gave no heed to what words they might speak to each other.

They were simple words that Joan and Aderhold spoke — old, old words of love and tenderness. They spoke of courage. And they spoke of Truth, the Origin and Goal. And they loved each other, and the light of all suns, and they found song and sweetness, promise and fulfilment even in this autumnal day. . . .

The miles fell away like the leaves from the trees. The ground rose; they had a great view bathed in the amber light. There flowed a gleaming crescent. "The river!" said Joan.

The town that they had seen from the south, now they saw from the north. They saw the river and the arched bridge, the climbing streets and many roofs; they saw the great church and near it the dark prison, and above the town the castle and the castle wood. The sun was sinking, the light was reddening;