

court is persuaded ; the patriotic fire is rekindled in the hearts of all. Joan is then given the command of 6000 men. She girds on the miraculous sword brought by her order from St. Catherine-de-Fierbois. And then with her snowy banner waving over her head, she marches without further delay to Orleans.

The besiegers of the city are a mere handful compared to the forces of the besieged. But such is the terror they inspire in the Orleanais that not a sally is attempted. The army is completely demoralized. But the appearance of Joan of Arc gives another turn to the war. Her first care is to re-establish discipline, to correct the morals of the soldiers, and to free the army from the crowd of plunderers who follow at its heels ; and such is her prestige over the soldiery that they comply without murmur with all that she commands.

Before attempting any attack, Joan writes to the Duke of Bedford, summoning him in the name of her Lord, King of Heaven, to deliver into her hands the keys of all the French cities which the English troops occupy, or else she will drive them out perforce. The English amazed at this assurance and new apparel of war, let the convoy approach unmolested before Orleans, where the Pucelle enters without striking a blow. The presence of Joan of Arc in the besieged city, her words, her very looks and deportment, breathe into every soul a new vigor ; the soldiers are ready to follow her wherever she wills. Numerous sallies prove successful, and one by one the surrounding forts fall into their hands. The strongest yet remains. The French generals hesitate but Joan has received the command of her "Voices"; she orders the attack. The English, though inferior in number, fight vigorously, and repulse the first onset of the Orleanais. Joan is wounded. At the sight of her blood, the woman weeps, but seeing the French retreating towards the city, she resumes her manly character ; "Stop ! stop !" she commands, "eat and drink ! as soon as my banner shall touch the wall, you will enter the fort." It is done as she said, and the next day the enemies raise the siege and fly towards Paris.

The fame of Joan of Arc is now scattered far and wide. The two camps are filled with the relation of her deeds. While the one sings her praises the other shudders at the mere mention of her name, and flings at her the worst epithets ever invented by hateful and revengeful hearts. But in the midst of her triumphs, where was the Pucelle ? Was she priding herself on her victories ? Follow her through Orleans, follow her to the Church, where, kneeling before her Lord, she bursts into a passionate flood of tears ! She weeps over the loss of her peaceful life ; she weeps over the blood that was shed, though she herself shed none ; she weeps over the foul taunts which the enemy throws in her face ; she weeps over all she has yet to do, but not for a moment does she harbor the thought of leaving her mission half-completed. She has begun the sacrifice, and she will accomplish it even at the cost of her life.

Joan is restless under inaction. At last she persuades Charles to proceed directly to Rheims. All the cities that lie in her way either open their gates or are taken at the first onset. The army thereby increases more and more every day. With what satisfaction and lightness of heart does not the Pucelle hail Rheims as one bright morning the city rises before her. There is to be completed her mission. She anticipates in thought the joyful hour when resuming her peasant's dress, she will be on the road to Domremy. But what cruel deception awaits her !

The joyous chimes spread throughout the land the welcome news, "France has a king ! Charles VII is the king !" Numerous cities swear allegiance to him.

Joan of Arc has fulfilled her twofold mission : the deliverance of Orleans and the coronation of the king at Rheims. To all who have carefully studied the facts there is no possible doubt about the more than natural character of her mission. How could she, a poor peasant-girl, naturally timid, have undertaken such an enterprise of her own movement ? How could she have deceived the learned doctors of Poitiers ? Whence comes the wonderful influence she exercises over all those who approached her ? How could her