

The civil wars of England from time to time occasioned the display of Chivalric valour. But in an age when the minds of men became more degenerate in proportion as the facilities for increasing their possessions became more numerous, selfish impulses, ambitious desires, impeded its every movement. Then the Reformation with its numerous and varied interests, its alluring novelty and fierce contention, superseded the old and now wearying charms of Chivalry; and after the reign of Elizabeth it had, in England, no real existence. In Germany, where its advent had been later and more slowly effected, it came to an almost abrupt termination. It may be said to have expired at the death bed of Maximilian, who is still called the lost Knight of that country. During the reign of the succeeding emperor the name and semblance of Chivalry remained; but there existed no longer that spirit, without which, the Institution, like the will-o'-the-wisp of the marshes, was only a glittering illusion.

France was later to discard the instrument which had achieved so much of her glory. As no distant period, however, its destiny had been predetermined in the course of events. It now commanded less esteem; exerted less influence; and, during subsequent periods, underwent frequent changes. The Institution, which had fanned through corrupt ages the flame of virtue, was degraded to a political machine; and the last page of its history was checkered with political crimes. When Joan of Arc revived the drooping spirits of her countrymen, and animated their breasts with martial fire, it again brightened into a semblance of its past glory. But merely transient and greater than its real powers warranted, was this revival of its former vigour and enthusiasm. The appearance of the "*gendarmerie*" effected another and important change in its history. It restrained its orders, degraded to the condition of common soldiers, from chivalric deeds by a strict military code. Then the wars in Italy occasioned a renewal of its languishing spirit; and Francis I witnessed the last effort to regain its past power and grandeur. The death of a King from wounds received at a tournament, and the consequent remonstrance of the clergy, caused the cessation of the last festival of Chivalry in France. Thenceforth its ceremonies were limited to the reception of Knights into the several orders. Its existence was virtually at an end. By some strange revolution in the policy of nations Kings sought sedulously to destroy it; and ministers of States feared it as a remnant of feudal power. The invention of gun-powder afforded a more expeditious mode of warfare. It remained a weather-stained and tottering ruin of its ancient grandeur; a past custom ill at ease and jostled by the novelty of progress. A refiner of peoples, it had become more base than they; a promoter of civilization, it had survived to behold itself surpassed by greater lights. Occasional deeds that savoured of the old Chivalry might awaken Kings from a supposition that it had altogether passed away; a Condé might assert its existence in the hearts of men and afford a glimpse of its ancient splendor; a Turenne might reveal in his own actions a trace of its olden simplicity and purity; or a Bayard, the last of a noble race, and a Knight without reproach, might evince its

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