

supernatural powers; others looked upon her enthusiasm as the result of an exalted state of her religious and patriotic feelings; whilst some have regarded her as the agent or dupe of a deep intrigue planned by the ministers of Charles VII."

Who, then, was this Maid of Orleans? A young peasant, eighteen or nineteen years of age, with a noble and lofty bearing, her countenance pleasing, but with an expression of pride, possessing a character remarkable for its mixture of candor and determination, of modesty and self-possession, and whose conduct excited the admiration of all who knew her. From the first moment that she entered on the career of a warrior, and from which no repulses were able to deter her, she became the most perfect model of a Christian knight. Intrepid, indefatigable, calm, pious, modest, an excellent horse-woman, and as skilful as an experienced leader in all the practices of arms, her whole career manifests a lofty inspiration, and bears the impress of a divine authority.—Charles Nodier. At the age of eighteen her mission is terminated, and it only remained for her to crown it with the act of martyrdom.

Thus we have on one side the most unimpeachable conduct, sagacity of no ordinary kind, and perfect integrity of the reasoning powers; while, on the other, as in many other celebrated persons, there were visions and revelations. Such were the facts of the case. Let us examine them more in detail:

When only eleven years old, Joan had her first apparition, which took place in the following manner: When in a meadow, along with her companions, she saw a young man near her, who said, "Joan, run to the house, your mother is in want of your assistance." Joan hastened to her mother, who declared she had not asked for her. The young girl rejoined her companions, when suddenly a white and brilliant cloud presented itself before her eyes, and a voice came from the midst of it, saying: "Joan, you are born to follow a different course of life, and to accomplish great wonders, for you are the person whom Heaven has selected to restore the kingdom of France, and to afford succor and support to Charles, who is now deprived of his empire. Dressed like a man, you will take arms, you will become the leader of the war, and everything will be conducted according to your directions." Day and night similar apparitions presented themselves to Joan, and for five years she remained in this troubled state. At length, in a final vision, she received the following announcement: "The King of Heaven commands you to proceed on your mission; ask no more how it is to be done, for such is the will of God in Heaven, and such it shall be fulfilled on earth. Go, then, to the neighboring district of Vaucouleurs, which alone of all Champagne has remained faithful to the king, and the commander of the district will conduct you without difficulty to the accomplishment of your desires."

When the unhappy girl answered the questions which were put to her by her enemies, she said that St. Catherine and St. Margarite had appeared to her when she was thirteen years old, and taught her how to conduct herself. The