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**OLD CATHEDRAL
OF RHEIMS CITY
WORLD'S WONDER**

Was Perhaps the Most Beautiful Structure of the Middle Ages

BEGUN IN 1211 AND COMPLETED IN 1311

Kings of France Were Crowned in it For About 700 Years

The old French city of Rheims, where destruction beyond man's power of reparation is being wrought by the German guns, is better known to the English-speaking world by name than most French places of its importance and size. Everybody knows that Joan of Arc experienced here the moment of her greatest triumph, when Charles VII. was, thanks to her victories over the English troops, crowned in the cathedral on July 17, 1429. The Jackdaw of Rheims is familiar to us all through an Ingoldsby Legend. Further, we think particularly of Rheims as "the place where champagne comes from."

Coronation City

Rheims is situated on the right bank of the Vesle, a tributary of the Aisne, in the Department of the Marne, and is 100 miles north-east of Paris. It has a population of 115,000. Dating back to the days of the ancient Romans, Christianity was preached at Rheims toward the end of the third century.

The celebrated Cathedral, in which the French Kings were crowned from 1179 to 1825, was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. A former edifice having been destroyed by fire in 1211, Bishop Alberic de Humbert undertook to build the Cathedral of Notre Dame in its place. It was finished in one hundred years, from 1211 to 1311, and this accounts for the wonderful unity of design and execution which characterized it as an example of Gothic architecture. Jean d'Orchais was the first architect, originating the plan and building the apse. The great doorway, crowned with the famous gallery containing forty-two statues of Kings of France, was chiefly the work of Robert de Courcy, in the beginning of the 14th century.

Beauty of the Interior

The interior of the Cathedral was 455 feet long, 98 feet wide in the nave, and 125 feet high in the centre, and comprised a nave with aisles, transepts with aisles, a choir with double aisles, and an apse with radiating chapels. It had a profusion of statues and stained glass of the 13th century. The rose window over the main portal and the gallery beneath were of rare magnificence. The cathedral possessed some of the oldest and most beautiful tapestries in Europe. The north transept contained a fine organ in a Flamboyant Gothic case. The choir clock was ornamented with quaint mechanical figures. In the cathedral were paintings by Tintoretto, Nicolas Poussin and others.

Wonderful West Front

But it was not the interior which was the glory of Rheims Cathedral. It was the marvellous West Front. As one drank in its beauty from the square in front, where the statue of Jeanne d'Arc was dwarfed into insignificance by the vastness and grandeur of the overshadowing facade, one felt the nobility, the richness, the genius of French Gothic, mother of all the Gothic styles which have added so much to the splendor of the modern world. It seemed impossible that the brain of one man could have conceived the perfect harmony of this

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BOAT**

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**THRILL AND RUSH
OF CAVALRY CHARGE**

THE following description of a cavalry charge in the Franco-Prussian war is reprinted from Emil Zola's novel, "The Downfall," by permission of the publishers.

The command ran along the line: "Keep touch of knees! Keep touch of knees!" in order to keep the men close up and give their ranks the resistance and rigidity of a wall of granite, and as their trot became swifter and swifter and finally broke into a mad gallop, the chasseurs d'Afrique gave their wild Arab cry that excited their wiry steeds to the verge of frenzy.

Unchained Demons

Onward they tore, faster and faster still, until their gallop was a race of unchained demons, their shouts the shrieks of souls in mortal agony; onward they plunged amid a storm of bullets that rattled on casque, and breastplate, on buckle and scabbard, with a sound like hail; the earth shook and trembled, leaving behind it as it passed an odor of burned woolen and the exhalations of wild beasts.

At five hundred yards the line wavered an instant, then swirled and broke in a frightful eddy that brought Prosper to the ground. He clutched Zephyr by the mane and succeeded in recovering his seat.

Almost Annihilated

The centre had given way, riddled almost annihilated as it was by the musketry fire, while the two wings had wheeled and ridden back a little way to renew their formation.

It was the foreseen, foredoomed destruction of the leading squadron. Disabled horses covered the ground, some quiet in death, but many struggling violently in their strong agony, and everywhere dismounted riders could be seen, running as fast as their short legs would let them, to capture themselves another mount.

Wildest Scene

Many horses that had lost their master came galloping back to the squadron and took their places in line of their own accord, to rush with their comrades back into the fire again, as if there was some strange attraction for them in the smell of sunpowder.

The charge was resumed, the second squadron went forward, like the first, at a constantly accelerated rate of speed, the men bending upon their horses necks, holding the saber along the thigh, ready for use upon the enemy. Two hundred yards were gained this time, amid the thunderous, deafening uproar, but again the centre broke under the storm of bullets; men and horses went down in heaps, and the piled corpses made an insurmountable barrier for those who followed.

Was Mowed Down

Thus was the second squadron in West Front, springing upward from the great pointed doorways and rising with majestic vigor to the height of the towers, immensely impressive in their simplicity and strength. It was like some handiwork of Nature. One can almost as well imagine a man designing Niagara or Mont Blanc.

This famous West Front, which has been styled "perhaps the most beautiful structure produced in the Middle Ages," was adorned with three exquisite recessed portals, containing 530 statues.

The Towers and Bells

The towers, 267 feet high, were originally designed to rise 394 feet. The tower on the south contained two great bells, one of which, named "Charlotte" by Cardinal de Lorraine, in 1570, weighed more than eleven tons. The facades of the transepts were also decorated with sculptures; that on the north with statues of the principal Bishops of Rheims, a representation of the Last Judgment and a figure of Christ, while that on the south side had a beautiful rose window with the prophets and apostles.

Above the choir rose a great bell-tower in timber and lead, 59 feet high, reconstructed in the 15th century.

Ancient Treasures

In the treasury of the cathedral was preserved the chalice of St. Remigius, from which the Kings of France used to drink wine at the end of the coronation ceremonies, and which, according to legend, was cut from the gold of the celebrated vase of Soissons broken by one of Clovis's soldiers. On February 1, 1886, the Cathedral of Rheims was affiliated to the world-famous Lateran Basilica, thereby participating in the privileges of all the indulgences and spiritual favors attached to the Cathedral of Rome. In 1891 the canons of St. Peter at Rome presented to the chapter at Rheims a portion of the relics of St. Petronilla, and the sacred bones were deposited in the cathedral on Whit-sunday, 1892. In 1875 the National Assembly voted \$400,000 for repairs of the facade and balustrades.

its turn mowed down, annihilated, leaving its task to be accomplished by those who came after.

When for the third time the men were called upon to charge and responded with invincible heroism, Prosper found that his companions were principally hussars and chasseurs de France. Regiments and squadrons, as organizations, had ceased to exist; their constituent elements were drops in the mighty wave that alternately broke and reared its crest again, to swallow up all that lay in its destructive path.

Moddering Experience

He had long since lost distinct consciousness of what was going on around him, and suffered his movements to be guided by his mount, faithful Zephyr, who had received a wound in the ear that seemed to madden him.

Beneath the fire, that became constantly more murderous as they drew nearer, the survivors in the wings wheeled their horses and fell back to concentrate their strength for a fresh onset.

Fourth Attempt Succeeded

Finally it was the fourth squadron, which, on the fourth attempt, reached the Prussian lines. Prosper made play with his saber, hacking away at helmets and dark uniforms as well as he could distinguish them, for all was dim before him, as in a dense mist. Blood flowed in torrents; Zephyr's mouth was smeared with it, and to account for it he said to himself that the good horse must have been using his teeth on the Prussians.

Awful Clamor

The clamor around him became so great that he could not hear his own voice, although his throat seemed splitting from the yell that issued from it.

But behind the first Prussian line there was another, and then another still. Their gallant efforts went for nothing; those dense masses of men were like a tangled jungle that closed around the horses and riders who entered it and buried them in its rank growths. They might hew down those who were within reach of their sabers; others stood ready to take their place, the last squadrons were lost and swallowed up in their vast numbers.

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