

a succession of Raphaele tableaux. First we see the poor ignorant girl with her rustic spindle, list'ning, in celestial rapture, to mysterious voices; then the scene shifts and we find her at the head of the army, clad in snow white armour, mounted on her charger and holding in her hand the banner studded with fleur-de-lys. But how sad and gloomy is the unravelling of this touching tragedy! There is Joan of Arc in prison; Joan of Arc at the tribunal; Joan of Arc at the stake; Joan of Arc the martyr for her country and let us hope, the saint!

O Domremy! well mayst thou boast of having been the birth-place of Joan of Arc, the deliverer of her country; well mayst thou pride in that statue that adorns thy public square; for never has there been a maiden more pious, more pure, more noble, more heroic than thy 'gentle Joan.' These virtues adorned her life, from its quiet dawn in the humble hamlet to its blood-purpled close at Rouen. The chronicles of the age relate in idyllic admiration the first stages of her life in the Vosges. Her childhood was divided between domestic work and the altar; her duties towards her parents and her duties towards God. But why dwell on this? Is it not self-evident? How candid, how stainless, how virtuous must have been this maiden, since God chose her from amongst the whole realm of France, to fulfil a grand and holy mission, and marked her brow with the sign of martyrdom.

When rosy childhood passed and Joan entertained higher sentiments, when she understood the meaning of those two sublime words, 'Deus et Patria'; when her heart bled at the recitals of the woes of France, told by the wounded soldiers who fled through her village and whose sick-bed she attended, she felt herself as if surrounded by a mysterious circle. Her sleep was haunted with dreams of armies and bloodshed; she saw the English sitting amidst the havoc of the French, and a pang of anguish pierced her heart. How often did she weep 'on the fair realm of France!' She then recalled the old prophecies — that a maid from the borders of Lorraine should save the land. One day she was thus brooding over the misfortunes of her country when suddenly,

in a dazzling light, appeared at her side the archangel St. Michael, who came a messenger from God, with the sublime command:

"Jeanne, Jeanne, debout! va délivrer la France!" Her first terror passed, Joan answers: "Messire, I am but a poor maiden. I know not how to ride to the wars, or to lead men-at-arms." But the heavenly envoy bids her: "Go to Beaudricourt, captain of Vaucouleurs, and God will help you." Who can imagine the doubts and fears that must have assailed the mind of the simple peasant girl at this apparition? But a continuous correspondence with heavenly voices soon comforted her and confirmed her in her mission. She assures her parents, her friends, Beaudricourt and all those who try to dissuade her from her project that she would rather stay at her humble cottage, but it is not of her own choice. It is her Lord that commands and she must obey, she must go to the king, were she 'to wear her limbs to the very knees.' "But who is your Lord?" they ask. "The God of Heaven." Beaudricourt hesitates for a long time to give her aid. But at last won by the air of candor, truthfulness and authority displayed in her entreaties and answers, he swears to lead her to the king. She starts for Chumon. Her journey hither is a real moral triumph, she wins minds and hearts as she is afterwards to win battles. Many are they who, at the strange news of the girl who pretends to have received the divine mission of saving France, come incredulous to meet her, to scoff at her; but at her sight change their minds and return home full of confidence in the protection of God.

At the court, Joan, not in the least intimidated by the brilliant crowd of courtiers, thought she has never seen him before, recognizes the dauphin, disguised as a simple nobleman. In vain does he deny his dignity, she insists firmly: "I tell you in the name of God, you are the son of the king, the true heir of France." The learned doctors of the University of Poitiers, who examine her, are astonished at the simplicity and correctness of her answers, and declare her to be "a good christian, a true catholic, and a very good person." The