

JOAN OF ARC

BY

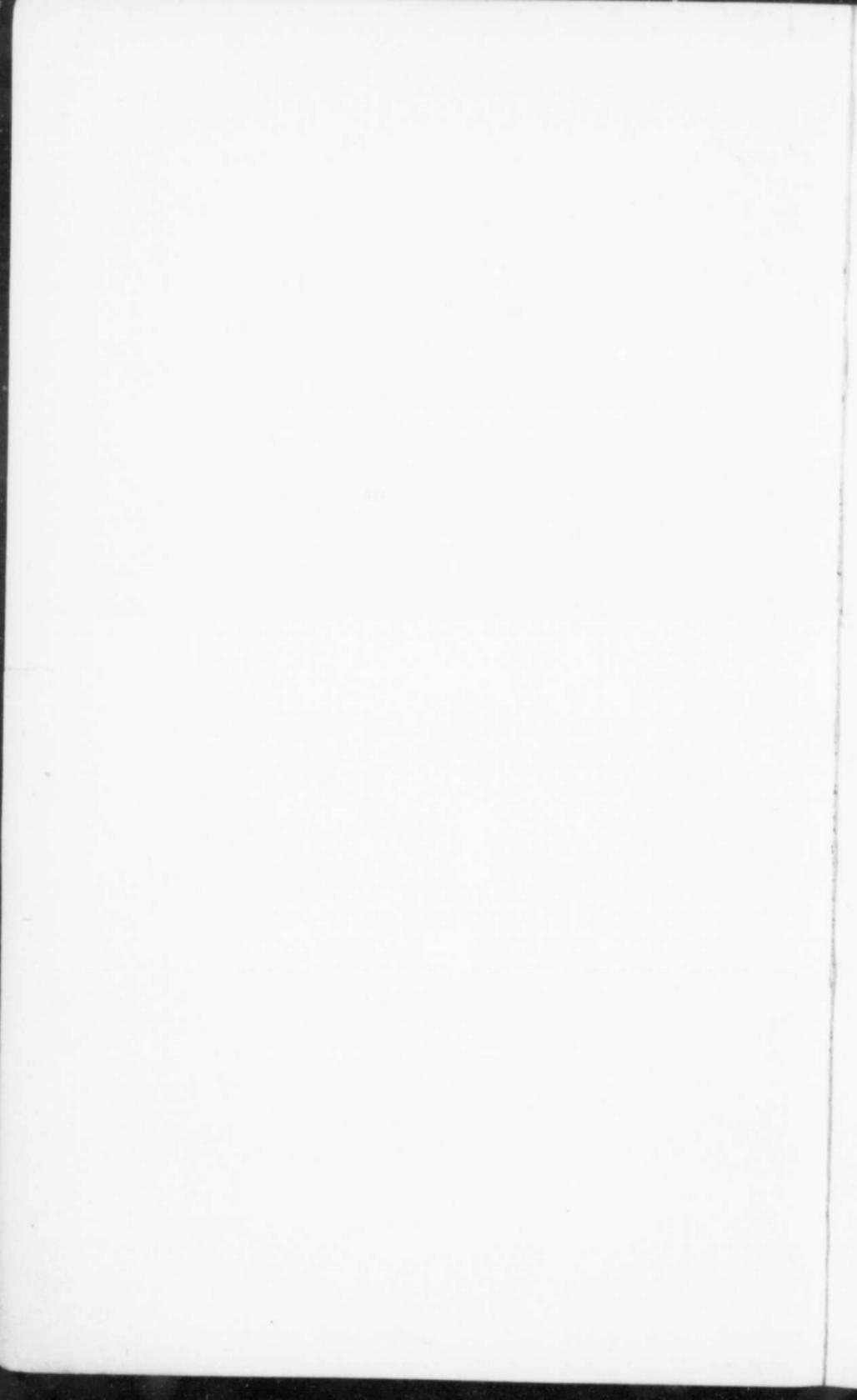
Rev. A. O'Malley

No. 5141

Cart party

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George & Bedford









Dedication

I dedicate the lines to the French
people, the compatriots of the im-
mortal Maid of Orleans.

A. O'Malley.

The Deanery
Barrie. Sept. 30, 1920.

The Foreward

Knowing that Joan of Arc was to be canonized in the near future, I began two years ago to write this poem in her honor. Prose and poetry have verily teemed with paeans of her praise, and great men have swarmed about her altars swinging the thuribles of their love and admiration. Six centuries have not silenced their song. I was daring indeed to profane the enchanted area with my uncouth effort; but the fascination of her patriotism, her sanctity and her fame proved too great for my resistance and I made bold to enter, even if it were to desecrate most holy ground. I drew from many sources: Andrew Lang, Grace James, Guizot, Mark Twain, Maxwell-Scott, Bernard Vaughan; but I followed very closely the historical narrative of Mrs. Sadlier. The first canto is a digest of several centuries' history, showing the decay of Joan's country and the need of a deliverer. The rest of the poem faithfully follows her career.

A. O'Malley.

JOAN OF ARC

—BY—

Rev. A. O'Malley



Author of:

Shakespearean Lectures

Miscellaneous Lectures

"The Wreck of The Titanic"

"American Statesmen"

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JOAN OF ARC.

CANTO ONE

—1—

Come to my aid, oh Spirit of God! teach me
Who sing the life and martyrdom of Joan,
The daughter of God, the Maid of France—teach me
To sing with siren, nay! seraphic tone
Of La Pucelle, the pride of France; I own
Myself but little can. Before my God
Let me be just—e'en France's crime condone;
She was by men sore beaten with the rod
Of persecution fell, and burned an Ichobod.

—2—

Oh, Virgin Queen! and heavenly angels fair!
Inspire me with the faith and hope and love
Of God, that girded Joan in her life's lair!
Vouchsafe to pour down unction from above!
Ye ministers of grace! and God's pure Dove
Whom I've invoked; come fling into my mind
The eloquence of Greek in porch and grove,
That I may soar to noblest heights though blind,
And Joan do justice full, the flower of womankind!

—3—

And thou, Oh Muse! grant grace unto my lines!
Make them my humble harp with raptures greet
E'en emptiest thou thy beauty's sparkling mines!
Make all my verses burn like incense sweet,
And measured as the pulsing spheres, still beat;
Give them the dignity, repose, and power,
That in the epic we are won't to meet!
Oh! make my song as sweet as musk rose bower,
Where mortals spent with strife, may steal a rapturous
hour.

—4—

There was a maid whose name was Joan, and she
Was sent from God, a saint, a shining light,
To save the ship of France from a wild sea
Of tears and blood beneath Cimmerian night.
The Dauphin Charles had contemplated flight,
To lurch dread death in this engulfing flood,
That whelmed his swooning soul with wildering fright
As on her groaning planks he stared and stood
Before the ravening waves, that snapped and snarled for
food.

—5—

Horizons raved behind with riven gloom;
His forbears poured out blood in purple seas
To save the sacred soil of France from doom;
Long floundering 'neath the foe, deaf to all pleas;
Struck down by French and foreign enemies.
Burgundians, French and English, sought to kill
The soul of France, their empires to increase;
And fashion her to their insatiate will
With Machiavellian art, and Sybaritic skill.

—6—

The juggernauts of war like mountain waves,
A hundred years, had rolled o'er Joan's fair France;
When Bedford's siege of bowered Orleans she braves,
And braving wakes the King's kinetic trance.
Will he dull-eyed cast e'en bewildered glance
From Brouges' hunt and Chinon's capering band
Towards Albion's arms that in vast waves advance;
And breathless take a brave Herculean stand
To live or die a king, for faith and fatherland.

—7—

Herculean stand! how could he stand
For aught of good? His mother Isobel
And Charles the Sixth gave him the blighting brand
Of lunacy, that doth with dragons dwell.
For fatherland, forsooth! could he do well
With not one mentor's rod his will to stay?
Were he an eremite in desert cell;
Or hunter e'en that chased the stag at bay,
He would a warrior rise, in serried ranks' array.

—8—

No! never did he stand for anything
Till death, Joan of her garlands had despoiled—
This wretched empty coffin of a King.
Nay! what Guescl'in, like Hercules, had toiled
To weld into a state Charles' madness moided,
As the wolf moids the lamb. Ah, Montereau!
Thy purple perfidy has, Philip embroiled
With Armagnacs. Hellhound this Charles to sow
France with a mortal feud, and corpses row on row.

J O A N O F A R C.

—9—

Yet angels prodigaled there, providence!
Yolande, Marie and Joan, have ye not spent—
Your lives for him? what was your recompense?
Ingratitude. Marie, thy heart was rent—
A Josephine to griefs' dread dungeon sent.
Oh, Agnes, scorpion! thou hast stung this wife,
And to Charles' history, hell's deep gloom hast lent.
Joan like Dian came silvering all his life—
She came the star of France, to 'lume its night of strife.

—10—

Like Jove came she to drive the English out,
And with what flaming bolts she forced their flight;
Before which storm they ran a Red-Sea rout.
She shot France through with sense of shame and blight;
Her rays piercing a Pharaoh's gory night
She seemed a pillar sent to them by God.
With voices armed and visions fair and bright
To free Belle France now writhing 'neath His rod—
The ardent Englishry, whose legions o'er France trod.

—11—

To courtiers eid—to Tremouille and Chartres
She merely was a mystic moon-struck maid;
How could she know Mars' and Bellona's art—
Lead men to war and through its red seas wade?
But who can fate or destiny fixed evade?
Impetuous as the tide, which none can stay,
She comes with curling crests o'er hill and glade.
Ah! they will hamper and hold brave Joan, yea,
And break her gallant will with bludgeons of delay.

—12—

Oh! for Prince Hal!—star worthy of her steel!
An eagle he would fly to clutch her aid!
Oh! that France had a Dauphin who could feel
The conflagration fired by Mars' own maid!
Oh! for a Fenelon to teach this jade!
Could even he pour honor in that soul,
And help him stand upright and unafraid,
While Joan led him and France to their true goal
Rejoicing like a Jove, thundering from pole to pole.

J O A N O F A R C.

—13—

Not desperate yet! for Powers of God in heaven
May hasten France to help with fiery arms -
And all her jaded ranks with courage leaven.
France once His darling now rent with alarms
Will have His legions aid in starry swarms.
Despair not then, but trust in God's great grace
That with its heat the broken-hearted warms!
Rise Charles! and e'en now Bedford's armies face!
For heaven and earth will help, e'en now they do embrace.

—14—

'Twas Jacob's ladder reached from earth to sky
With white-winged angels fluttering up and down:
Joan stayed in France whence she was loath to fly
And donned St. Michael's spear and Mars' own frown.
She swiftly swooped upon the English down,
And swept them from her coast with all their kin;
Then guarded she like cherubim the crown,
While Dauphin Charles was deafened with the din
And clash of heavenly arms, that victories for him win.

—15—

St. Michael fought 'gainst Lucifer's power in heaven
Nay! fights the dragon in all lands oppressed;
Hence France he lends—Bellona's bolts now riven—
Fierce prowess to destroy the English pest.
Thus Joan like Lucifer armed in plumes and crest
The cohorts mighty of Brittanla slew.
So with the strength of heaven's warrior blest,
Sir Robert Beaudricourt, Joan straight did sue
To send her armed with guard, the king to interview.

—16—

Both good and evil bring forth germane fruits;
From thistles who reaps figs or grapes from thorns?
The rose and lily rise from alien roots.
What else but giant oaks spring from acorns?
So in St. Michael anchored, young Joan scorns
The fears of Beaudricourt and his weak men.
A saintly patriotism her brow adorns—
Whose fame skipped over mountain heath and glen,
Till angels it had reached, in heaven beyond earth's ken.

J O A N O F A R C.

—17—

By Gabriel was the Virgin's mission given,
That pierced her heart with keen and cruel sword:
To clothe the Lord with flesh was aiding heaven,
Her office grand and incarnate the Word—
The Son of God. When Mary the voice heard
She shook like aspen leaves, though not dismayed;
So fluttered Joan e'en like a wounded bird,
And drooped when angels their first visit paid;
But soon arose resolved, for France through gore to wade.

—18—

Men hear strange voices still and visions have;
They call to heroes 'neath France' poppies dead,
Then why should we hysterically rave
If Joan with angels' aid great armies led?
Why should Charles and his wily counsellors dread
A strategy keen beyond all earthly ken?
France at their hands in billows e'en had bled
When Joan appeared; it was one demons' den
Of fratricidal fiends, who wore the masks of men.

—19—

Angelic maid! sweet Joan—the child of God
Revealed His will to France and all the world
That had forgotten Him. She saw His rod
Playing the land of France, and then unfurled
Her pure white flag, whereon was pearled
The names Jesu, Marie; so to recall
Her country from its sin, to which 'twas hurled
By wicked men. She taught time is not all—
To hearken to God's voice, then heed their country's call.

—20—

She was of chivalry the fruit and flower;
Sprung from the church and Christianity.
Like oaks that fight the blast she grew in power;
Her life yet was like lilies on the lea,
As pure as the great crystal sea,
A chalice with its cup turned toward the skies;
She vowed to God her chaste virginity.
The envious peasant claimed a princely prize;
She was an angel bright, wearing a maid's disguise.

JOAN OF ARC.

—21—

Ah! history! never yet did'st thou say all.
Thou sing'st of princes—revolutions rife,
Of men-at-arms in wars that men appal;
Silent thou art of conscience' inner life
That consecrated Joan midst all her strife
To God. Nor does the ghastly graven stone,
With epitaph, for calumny's keen knife—
Contumely's cruel buffeting, atone,
Declaring her earth's queen, where she doth reign alone.

—22—

Yet tell how France turned theatre of war—
How Hastings' hordes and Edward's legions fell
Upon her fields like some weird wandering star
Till all her peaceful plains became a howling hell.
Then too of heroes, kings and brave Joan tell,
Who like Gibraltar stood up for their race,
When battles' tides were tolling its death-knell.
Say all with Virgil's art and Horace' grace
And everywhere let truth and candor interlace.

—23—

In agony fierce of death Belle France what cause
Hath laid thee low expiring on the road
To nationhood? Was't Fate that gave thee pause?
Or was't the gods admiring thy abode
That through thy pretty purpling vineyards rode;
Or did the demons envying virtue there
Give passions' steed loose rein and goring goad
To crush with iron hoof beyond repair
The perfumed vales of France, than Eden once more fair.

—24—

What cause? What cancer? 'Tis impossible
That France so blessed with soil and sun and air
Should fall a victim to fanged hungers fell.
Brawls' bursting flames, like fired volcanoes, flare,
Inviting Englishry and Danes to dare
Her sovereignty into war's bloody lists;
While enemies' swords within her loins, impair
Her mangled majesty; without insists
The alien on his spoil, and France's arm resists.

—25—

Say too how Merovignians ope France' gate
 To Charlemagne whose sottish sons appal
 E'en luxury:—Hugh Capet dares the Fates—
 Unfriendly feudals in their mountains tall
 To dice with him a dynasty's downfall:
 And the Valois allures these lusty lords
 To give Mars' answer to young Edward's call
 Who fought 'gainst France, with armed and ardent hordes,
 And ran her body through, with ruthless reeking swords.

—26—

But 'twas the Danes fierce Rollo and Hastings
 That swooped down like a cloudburst on the land;
 Incompetence inviting, once called kings,
 Who wore rare gems no Midas could command.
 What could the barons but as Mount Blancs stand—
 The vassals what but as Gibaltars dare
 The angry flood? The burghers' serried band
 Fought for the Dauphin—a division rare—
 That made France' comely land, a jungle and a lair.

—27—

Nay! now Capetian sands were running low;
 Phillip with barrenness in boys was clad:
 The peers must find male heirs their dice to throw;
 They chose the Valois whose race all but mad
 Ran riot in their jousts, the people sad.
 Young Phillip then they chose to be the King
 Of fretful France, which for the nonce was glad:
 But Isabella's Edward too could bring
 The royal blood and brain, and to France' crown would
 cling.

—28—

'Twas never task of gods to light a war—
 'Twixt France and England, then barbaric both;
 Enamored of the wound and glorious scar
 In battle won. Edward detesting sloth
 Would win his laurels in the field; yet clothe
 His cause with show of honor's clearest claim:
 So he went forth to forge his empire's growth;
 Ambition aping Alexander's fame
 That hung like Erebus, o'er every other name.

—29—

Aye! Edward, Isabella's son and heir
Loves well the lilies of his mother's land;
He languishes and longs to quarter there
His legions, France and Flanders to command.
The nation's peers, steel hooped one patriot band,
Now choose Valois their Emperor and King
And, Salic Franks, like promontories, stand.
To Edward, Crecy and Calais take wing,
And Albion has a nest, whence France's heart to sting.

—30—

Prostrate in heart France lay. The kingship was
With burghers most rapacious maws distraught;
While eyried barons buried their sharp claws
Deep in her bleeding form. Then Charles was nought;
Between the wind and whirlwind he was caught
And back and forth was flung like Autumn leaves.
He were a man that had these felons fought—
These banded bucanears, these treacherous thieves.
No! Charles waves not the wand, that anarchy's red tide
cleaves.

—31—

At Poitiers, France disgraced, drank of the dust;
When John a prisoner was dragged in exile
To languish there and in dank dungeons rust
Till Bretigny oped wide his prison vile.
Charles 'clept the wise reigned in his lieu the while;
And coward though in war and inexpert—
More suited to the court, the home of guile,
He could the swirling gorge of statecraft skirt—
In faculties for foes, too agile and alert.

—32—

The barons and the burghers watched his hand
Gouging gold currency, like wolves in rage.
Marcel like Mars in Paris took command;
In Flanders Jack Bonhomme threw down the gauge:
Then Charles "the Wise" had bedlam for his wage
And France rode to her grave in dunest hearse.
Now Charles, experience schooled, turned Solon sage,
And Guesclin aiding, he sought to reverse
Misfortune's tide at full, that would all France Immerse.

JOAN OF ARC.

—33—

The treaty of Bretigny ransomed John—
And ruined France, for maimed henceforth she lay.
Ensotted by repose he could not don
The kingship nor its offices obey.
Ah! 'twas for France a bitter, baneful day;
When he restored for Philip, Burgundy—
A resurrection destined France to slay;
For Flanders fell to him north by the sea—
A maiden's marriage dower, which gave him sovereignty.

—34—

The House of Valois boasts but one wise son
Who buttressed though a boy the tottering state;
And fighting drove with Guesclin's aid alone,
The invader even to the Calais gate.
Yet was it not a wise decree of fate
That Philip's heirs like shooting stars should fall
And leave fair France a kingless quarrelling state;
That was to Albion's arms a constant call:
Aye! and to Joan a cause, who would their powers appal.

—35—

"The grave of goodwill and good laws in France":
Is epitaph of Charles' and Bella's reign.
Romantic marriage! first-born of mischance!
Of Charles the Sixth and Isobel the bane.
It was the Nemesis of vows profane.
Can Isobel by history be excused?
'Tis hard to pass through pitch without a stain.
The Valois-vulture, gods and men, abused
And every passion gorged, till appetite refused.

—36—

The Barry, Burgundy, Bourbon, Anjou,
Ranged France like ravening wolves that stalked for prey,
And soon a ghoulish gang of felons grew,
That traded heaven and earth for place and pay.
Oh irony! aye! King Charles came back one day;
Usurpers had too soon begun to brag.
Ah! then his uncles hunted stood at bay;
With rifles pointing from o'erhanging crag,
While earth and ocean too, seemed suddenly to sag.

—37—

The King to curb o'erbearing Burgundy,
 Who like an Alp towered o'er his tottering state,
 Appointed Orleans to wake rivalry,
 And so the stage set for France' fearful fate.
 They swear vendetta's deep barbaric hate
 And crucify and mangle bleeding France;
 They fight like demons till it is too late
 When Albion's vulture sweeps down with light's glance,
 Drawn by France' carrion corpse, their morsel in advance.

—38—

They murdered Orleans' duke: the Armagnacs
 Bernard and Bonne convulsing with fiends' hate;
 Which only hell's hot execution lacks.
 France reeling falls beneath the feud's fell weight—
 'Neath suicide and slaughter of the state.
 Now Isobel is pawn moved by the foes—
 Tossed like a broken spar by waves of Fate.
 But France! poor France reaps what her Harpy sows—
 A harvest of dead sons, who sleep reft of life's rose.

—39—

Urged by their madness, Henry now demands
 The crown and crest of France. Think! in disguise
 Oft blessings come! The dukes join hands
 And fight at Agincourt. The fickle skies
 Crush all their hopes. Will their stars ever rise?
 Not till a Joan is born. Darkness ere dawn
 Wears dunnest pall. The sun now pines
 The clearing east; the dragons like the fawn
 That's frightened, hide their heads, nay to hell's pit have
 gone.

—40—

Troyes! thou gavest France a foundling fatherland;
 Thy shameless perfidy pierced her as with a lance;
 Aye! stung false hearts with hoops of steel to band,
 Pledging their swords and substance to enhance
 Her faltering powers. How could the wolf mischance
 O'ertake a country called back from the grave
 Of fratricidal feud where horrors dance?
 Yes! Troyes! as mad as maniacs mere that rave,
 To Albion's ravening wolves, the heart of France thou gave.

—41—

Troyes! deeper than Calais in Mary's heart,
 Indelibly is writ in France's page;
 Full many a tear for centuries still will start
 In patriots' eyes flooding their banks with rage.
 There, Isobel for paltry pander's wage
 Proclaimed the doubtful die of Charles her son,
 And Katherine cooped in Albion's gilded cage.
 Poor France must boom her mournful minute gun,
 And wear her widow's weeds, 'neath murky midday sun.

—42—

No traitor Burgundy! he never will
 Betray his country's cause. He draws apart
 A patriot noble: sullen toward Charles still,
 But never dreams of piercing France's heart.
 Requital and reward! dead with a dart
 By hellhounds fired, at honor's conference.
 Insanity this! murdering him to start
 A sulphurous seething feud, as hell intense,
 'Twixt fiends that look like men, but monsters are immense.

—43—

Now myrtle and sad cypress fringe Gaul round;
 The Dauphin is a monster loose in France,
 While Katherine to the Englishry is bound.
 Poor Isobel her baseness doth enhance
 Abandoning her boy self to advance.
 John slaughtered, Philip flies to Albion's arms;
 Troyes' terms France' sovereignty to Henry grants;
 Why wonder then to Meuse run wild alarms
 And peasants rush to war, from peaceful piping farms.

—44—

Nay! France a desert turns and her rich lands
 Lie fallow. Bedford and Dunois contest
 The fortresses in battles hand to hand.
 Brigandage, massacre, rapine confessed,
 Become a trade. The carnage to arrest,
 Men flee like hunted deer to the walled town,
 Which closes gates with famine's fangs distressed.
 Ah! then the noble soul of France fell down;
 Her body in the dust, one wound from foot to crown.

—45—

Lo! what a noble birth was then! The dread
of death gave France back youth—gave France to live
Gave France a soul—gave France a heart and head.
Her glorious fleur-de-lis she will not give
To Albion's King; history would ne'er forgive.
Cost it the last drop of the nation's blood
She'll stand up 'gainst the foe like beetling cliff;
That scatheless lets the huge bombarding flood
Besiege its buttressed base, without or gain or good.

—46—

All but too late a maid leaps, like a fiend
From hell, upon the field; the mother cries
For help who in her heart, false friends had screened.
Joan hears afar her dying country's sighs
And from its body the vast vampire pries,
That sucks the blood till it wanes cold and white,
As stars that spangle all the winter skies.
The earth now dim with time saw ne'er such sight—
A wight of eighteen years, turning France' tidal flight.

—47—

In his palm Paris now, and towered Rouen,
This demigod sets heart on half of France
As Katherine's dower, doing the gods no wrong,
Since it seeks her as stag for streamlet pants.
Nay! war will haply fortune's fruits enhance:
At Orleans fighting he will Charles' doom crack
And to France' confines like the arrow glance.
The Armagnacs will fly a famished pack;
Or die burned at the stake, or with the rope and rack.

—48—

At Rouvray heaven's keystone dropt down on France,
And crushed the great soul of brave Count Claremont.
E'en Scotland's clans that hurled like Jove the lance
A remnant ran like hare 'fore hounds at hunt.
John Falstolfe leading wore Mars' wrinkled front,
And fell upon the French like heaven's forked fire.
Now Orleans must bear the fierce fatal brunt
Or horrid war, and breast its tidal ire;
Or falls the dynasty, and falls too France's Sire.

J O A N O F A R C .

—49—

Now haughty Albion pampered by victory,
Encamps around Orleans as Argives Troy;
And builds bastiles so as to turn the key
Still held by Fate. They reck't not that at Blois
An army chafed like leashed hounds to deploy;
Nor that Orleans fenced France's flower within.
No! they will tantalize feint and decoy;
Till meteor-like Joan's legions once begin
Her campaign, when e'en gods have not a chance to win.

—50—

Faint ye then fates of France, her hour at hand?
Will ye not stand and fight for fair Orleans?
See there within, her generals like brass stand!
Dunois, Saintrailles, LaHire, her banner screens.
The garrison on a starving city leans;
Then help her gods and riving lightnings send
Armed with red bolts, forged for hell's horrid fiends!
Thus fated prowess of the British bend;
And fainting friends of France, with Mars' own minions
mend!

—51—

Now gaze two Titans on the river Loire,
Where Orleans lay like gem embossed—
A jewel of rare price brought from afar
And rich as ocean's golden stores. What cost
Too great for such a prize? For Orleans lost,
Charles' tottering kingship, royal crest, and crown,
Were in the silent sea of history tossed.
They prowl and glare and like two Aetnas frown.
Alas! When they embrace, must France in French blood
drown.

—52—

As when great Julius from this life was hurled
Strange prodigies and pests made heaven their throne;
And weirdest omens their fell flags unfurled
By strong Eolian winds to tatters blown:
So France and Death when in the lists alone
Like demons struggled for the palm, the sky
Was cloven and the earth and sea did moan.
Then 'twas that Joan was born, sent from on high,
And all France sang, as if the "Prince of Peace" passed by.

CANTO II.

—1—

An oasis and isle to France ring true
Mount Saint Michel and Castle Vaucoleur;
Hardby the murmuring Meuse and the sea-mew.
Time's hand tugs at the rope to toll their hour;
But Providence unearths uncanny power;
Perhaps an angel-hand will hold the bell.
Although the English storm to west doth lower
There is a little maid in Lorraine dell
Will David-like with sling, their huge Goliath fell.

—2—

Mount Saint Michel! France' eyes fill at thy praise.
Fidelity and faith dwell on the rock
Beside thy monastery; nor yet decays
Thy splendid pride. Thou standest and tamest the shock
Of ocean: centuries thou hast kept thy flock
of eremites safe from besieging seas
And like the pyramids time, navies mock:
Nay! broadsides booming like Jove's thunder, tease
Old Albion's might and main, till flight they safely seize.

—3—

France' flag floats still o'er pinnacles that stand
Like hoary elves to guard the Norman coast;
Though on thy rock there's scarce a foot of land
Nor can it tower or beetling fortress boast.
'Tis like a festooned plot with sweet flowers closed—
With flowers that bloom for heaven's high starry hall
Though needed still by earth's poor fallen host,
That flounder in the darkness 'neath sin's pall
To fling sweet smelling nards, to lands that palsied fall.

—4—

Far to the east where the slow sedgy Meuse
Midst marsh and meor meanders to the sea
The fortress Vaucoleur stands and imbues
The denizens with fear of felony.
Sir Robert Beaudricourt scorned to agree
With Burgundy—with treason's friends in France.
He sturdy stood, nor would he flinch or flee—
Gibraltar 'gainst the devastating dance
Upon his country's ruins, seen but in orgy's trance.

—5—

Domremy! now come I to thee. The word
Is sweet as Christmas chimes to children's ears.
To sing of thee as it is meet I gird
Myself still faltering and beset with fears
Lest I should fail to win France' frantic cheers:
They love to sing the songs that praise thy name—
That name which gives birth to divinest seers
And to Olympus sends them seeking fame
Or to Poseidon's lair, his fera fierce to tame.

—6—

Where the Vosges mountains fondle marshy Meuse
The village sleeps and graces the fair scene.
At eve while bright orbs sing, the peasants cruise
Upon the river steeped in Dian's sheen:
When Phoebus gilds the east they rise and glean
Their frugal store from forest, stream and field.
There's in their midst a mystic little queen—
A heavenly maid who'll fight for France, and wield
The power of the great God,—her breast plate and her
shield.

—7—

Long rows of mortar houses fringe the roads
That ribbon-like run to the Rhine and sea:
These are their castles rough and rude abodes;
But they have peace and plenty and are free.
The village church, where busy as the bee,
They worship God, is quarried stone and strong.
Nay! lively faith, to history is the key
Of all the works and wonders, that in song
To meek Domremy's Maid, and her bright star belong.

—8—

Fastby the church a little cottage stands
Enconced in flowers festooning it around:
A hardy husbandman the home commands,
And plenty and rude pastimes there abound.
Who can on continents or seas be found,
That knows not Jacques D'Arc's and his darling's fame
Which is with history's rarest garland crowned?
Thing strange, 'twas from his dark abysmal shame
Immortal praise and thanks, to his poor cottage came.

J O A N O F A R C.

—9—

Fair Isobel his bride had trudged to Rome
A pilgrimage to make and gain God's grace:
Returned, like peris paradise, her home
The villagers sought, for all men could trace
The lineaments of virtue in her face.
The children aimed her mirrors bright to be,
As heaven's blue copies the tinge of the sea.
E'en Joan became a soldier France to free;
Though she was saint of God, and that by fixed decree.

—10—

Jacques D'Arc a man of might was in the place—
A magistrate of just and noble mien:
His eyes were earnest and would Eden grace,
For in them rugged virtue could be seen.
His vine-clad cottage with its sward of green,
A palace grand was to the callow swains.
With village Solons, solemn kind and keen,
He counselled how to swell their mutual gains,
Or prophesied the hour, when France would be in chains.

—11—

About the fire-place huge, that almost stretched
Across the room, they watched the beech-tree burn;
Or from the neighboring wood, the maple fetched,
Replenishing it each with logs in turn:
Or dropped the fat into the boiling urn
Of brass and iron, that hung from the crane.
Then chatted they about misfortunes stern,
Of century weltering wars—the country's bane
That angels would have driven to hell's pit, ease to gain.

—12—

The children romped in reels and then ran mad
About the place: the clatter that arose
Was like the thundering drums' that bandsmen clad.
They also played at shooting down the foes
And made their elders as the English pose.
At length like frightened deer they leaped at call,
And shot outdoors at the wars' bloodless close,
Where they stood like stark statues 'gainst the wall
That none could ever dream, they would each other maul.

—13—

The scene was changed when war-worn veterans came
 To Jacques D'Arc's pretty peaceful home.
 And with deep wounds from bloody battles lame
 Samaritans sought, 'neath his modest dome.
 The little maids, for pleasure wont to roam,
 In coif and kerchief decked, would entertain
 These broken hearts with love's romantic tome,
 And clothe them warm, escaped from snow or rain,
 With more than mother's love, relieving every pain.

—14—

At least once, news was needed not of Mars.
 Burgundian brigands riving mount and glen
 Broke on them like a storm, and so the war's
 Red welter lay before their wildered ken.
 To Neufchateau by night both beasts and men
 In panic ran before the rising sea,
 And cowered there as do wounded wolves in den,
 Till kind heaven hearsed her evil star, and lea
 And village called them home, like meads the honeybee.

—15—

Domremy not removed but leagues from Rhine,
 Far from Orleans the diadem of Loire,
 Was all but sacred refuge-city shrine.
 Pavilioned there from slings and shafts of war,
 The herds and flocks, the fields and gardens, are
 Their only care. Yet e'en the children longed
 To know how fared Belle France; and if her star
 Would shine again: she was by Albion wronged
 Riving like Jove the land; that to old Gaul belonged.

—16—

In these mad times the Maid was born: she was
 A saint, a sheperdess, a seamstress too,
 A patriot diapasoned to the cause
 Of France. The care of flock and field she knew:
 In stature robust as the oak she grew;
 Yet delicate and dainty as the rose
 In mind and manners, she was wont to srew
 Flowers daily on the shrine, and in her pose
 To bow like angels low, that round God's throne repose.

—17—

How proud was she when pilloried at last
In old Rouen, her pure life to portray;
It was a lily-bell by angels cast;
She dally went to church to praise and pray;
With Mengette and Haumette then she would play;
Or ply like humming-bird her household care.
To spin and knit she learned and to crochet;
So ladies great and grand could not compare
With her in homely skill, were it or rich or rare.

—18—

Two leagues beyond, St. Remy's abbey lay.
The peasants wrought like bees at needle's art
To weave rare copes immortal as the bay
For princes blazing with gems that cocks start.
Their rivalries, like those of 'change or mart
Basilicas grand, as the Orient dressed,
And priests with robes they would not for Ind part.
In needlework Joan blushing confessed
She was not inexpert. when she Rouen addressed.

—19—

Nor was aesthetic skill alone the sum
Of all her qualities. Jacques D'Arc was stern;
Nor could vice with its horrid visage come
Within his sinless home. Nay, he did burn
The high and holy will of God to learn.
His boys and girls must into roses turn
As they the bloody fate of martyrs learn.
He'd rather see Joan dead—sealed in an urn—
Than taint with worldly ways, the lily of his name.

—20—

Nor was this tyranny; 'twas truest love
Which all men, deputies of heaven, owe
To children vouchsafed them. The stars above
'Tis rumored govern wisely all below;
But it's well known we reap whate'er we sow.
If lilies pure we plant in the child's heart,
And next them roses red in the same row;
Rear shall we garden grand and past all art:
So virtues sown and sunned, will in our darlings start.

J O A N O F A R C.

—21—

Her truest friend the pious Isobel
Taught Joan the prayers that brought her heart content—
When, sang like spheres the chiming Angelus bell
To cross herself and all her sins repent.
This blessed mother to Belle France was sent
By God himself to give to her a saint
And soldier, to heal up the ghastly rent
In her dear country's side, and to acquaint
The whole world with one truth, that Joan was free from
taint.

—22—

Dame Isobel sowed every virtue's seed;
And better builded, aye! did better sow
Than e'er she dreamed: for conscious of Joan's greed,
Like blasting worm in bud, all things to know,
Of brave Deborah she spoke who killed the foe,
And Judith saving the whole Hebrew race.
The while young Joan with fancy's fires aglow
Resolved the war-worn fields of France to grace
Like heroines of old, whose story strong men daze.

—23—

Besides, she taught her the Lord's prayer and creed,
And the Hail Mary; but not A nor B;
So wonder wild-eyed asked, in France's need,
Where Joan got skill to calm her bloody sea.
A towering patriot and sweet saint was she,
Who from her angels learned the twanging bow
And arts of peace. What need has honey-bee
Of letters' aid? Sans science' help they know
Their palaces to build, and chink them 'gainst the snow.

—24—

The "Holy House" Joan's home is called by France—
A symbol sacrosanct for great and small
Of patriotism pure; thence from which manse
With sword she went—went at France' frantic call—
Aye; went for pity pure to stay the brawl
That crimsoned her fair fields and place the crown
Upon the Dauphin's head. No Chinese wall
Could give her pause. She threw the bastions down
Of buttressed Englishry, with magic of renown.

—25—

What other causes of this prodigy
Can be assigned? The valley of the Meuse
Whose fruitful soil brings forth the plenteous sea
Of golden grain and purple grapes to bruise,
A heroine to France will not refuse.
Joan was a vase of vigor nature sown—
A vessel of election bearing news
From Michael and the angels near God's throne
That heartened fainting France, like shambles of death
blown.

—26—

Not serious still, nor solemn aye was she;
Joan loved like life sly pranks, and so full oft
She hid her hence to Boischenu—a sea
Whose silent depths the children charmed. The soft
And tender shade cast by the leafy loft
Of boughs, was deep and cool. She loved to play
And to contest the game, and often doffed
Her bonnet and chabots to win the bay,
Or laurel so much prized, in Grecian holiday.

—27—

She was the darling of the birds and beasts;
Like Francis she would feed and fondle them.
How good it were to see these fluttering feasts!
Birds hung on her like berries on a stem
Until she sparkled like an eastern gem.
The beasts played pranks and at her feet fell down,
Proud if they only touched her garments' hem.
If kindness to the dumb deserves a crown
She wears one even now, she never wore a frown.

—28—

Tired of the oakwood haunts the hermitage
"Our Lady's" called, hardby the murmuring Meuse,
She often sought at eve, to earn the wage
Of her Lord's love. Nor did He e'er refuse
To pour heaven's oil and wine into her cruse;
Elect she seemed to be the child of God.
Full oft she would in May herself amuse
Entwining garlands for the shrine; then plod
Fatigued with weight of wreaths, like flowers that droop
and nod.

JOAN OF ARC.

—29—

In May the month of Mary 'twas her joy
To marshal all the maidens in a guard
And march with lighted candles for to cloy
Heaven's Queen with love. They would award
The statues each boquets and burn the nard
In votive lamps to honor and to pay
Their heavenly patrons; or seek fresh reward.
Then they would sing hymns piously and pray
That Mary intercede. for sinners, waif and stray.

—30—

She loved to hear the sound of the church bells,
That came like song of angels to her ear;
To Mass called they or were they funeral knell,
She hastened to the church or to the bier
Or knelt in prayer or sang like chanticleer
With congregation or choir in God's praise.
If times the sexton slacked she would draw near
And gently reprimanding her voice raise;
Or give him lunas sweet, to cure his lazy ways.

—31—

Her charity was still humble yet it took
The grandest forms. Wayfarers she would nurse
Without or art or science steeped in book.
Nor need he have or gold or scrip in purse:
She'd in the new-mown hay herself immerse
And sleep the night when nowhere else was found
That comfort be the lot of travellers.
She dressed their wounds and with fine l'inen bound
Them up; she would use any means, like ships aground.

—32—

To tragedy this was but the morning strand.
These offices exalted her sweet mind,
And threw the fire of heroine in her hand.
Nay, smiling she the bleeding wound could bind
And round the broken soldier's heart love wind.
Her angels daily told her of God's call
"For pity" to save France. She was resigned
And fought like demon to prevent the fall
Of Orleans in her dreams, beneath the tottering wall.

—33—

Was it the call of France, or the high call
Of God, made Joan the world's one heroine?
Was it the love of fatherland enthralled
Her soul, and forced her midst the battle's din:
All these momentous motives must have been
The masons buttressing her genial mind.
Her angels and her voices helped her win;
For nature, with the hand of heaven unsigned,
Goes forth to seek its end, like day with the sun blind.

—34—

'Twas June and forth to sew and sing went Joan
Beneath the orchard bower. Like seas' dark green
Waved all the shrubs by zephyrs blown.
Great hollyhocks and proud sunflowers were seen
All nodding in the balmy breeze. The scene
Was beautiful, and the little maid was gay;
The sun from its gold mine flung mints of sheen
That flooded all Domremy. Yet that day
The plight of France grieved Joan, weltering in war's fierce
fray.

—35—

She loved to steep her soul in sad conceits;
That coiled about her like snakes round their prize:
Were she in garden closed, or in the streets
She heard the clash of arms and dying cries.
Would not the great God in His wrath arise
And drive the pestilent fierce invader out,
Who ranged her France in torturing enterprize?
If prayer will not the fierce marauder rout
Then Joan will fight to death, and all their powers flout.

—36—

That day Joan in the garden, a great light
Like morning flooded the whole lawn; a voice
Called her:—"Be good and prudent and do right;
The love of pleasure oft the maid destroys!"
She fainted as when love's first madness cloys.
Like lambs she lingered in the sunny scene,
Enamored of the meads like wanton boys;
And when she moved great majesty of mien
Hung like a mantle grand, upon some earthly queen.

J O A N O F A R C .

—37—

A secret coiled like cobra in Joan's breast
That gripped her very soul in its strong vise,
Obeying it like babes the mother's gest.
'Twas clear she suddenly had grown angel wise,
For wild-eyed ecstasies still seized their prize;
Wherein delirious she was with delight.
Her mind excursions made off to the skies,
Forgetting garish day and glorious night;
Her sense eclipsed with joy, that God for France would
fight.

—38—

These visitations were sublime and grand;
Nay, far too riving for her infant soul!
Yet when her angels came and gave command,
In conclave secret with her hosts she stole.
St. Michael in the drama played first role;
He loved the land of Joan and longed to give
France back to Charles. Now Joan this arduous goal
Must gain: 'twas leaping from a frowning cliff
Down on the distant shore, where none could leap and live.

—39—

But Margaret and Katherine too will assist
And daily, like the north star ships, will guide;
Besides a milky-way—a silvery mist
Of heavenly spirits were ever at her side.
Was she mad? Did she dream? She tried and tried
To plumb her mind, explore its vasty deep;
For she would rather spin and sew than ride
The chariots fierce of war, and with Mars leap
Into a sea of blood, where death and devils keep.

—40—

An omen 'twas if Joan but only knew
That Margaret and Katherine God's martyrs were.
As sisters, fond of her as love, they grew,
And lavished there a heaven of gracious care;
While others, with crowns jewelled on their hair,
Consoling came from Jove's vast starry deep.
Yet these with those could not in aught compare:
For they were constant as the ploughman's sleep;
And will Joan e'en in chains, or death's dread agony keep.

—41—

'Twas mostly in the oakwood dim they came,
Where she was wont to wander and to play
With birds and beasts, once wild but to her tame
As stars that march in heaven's milky way.
In garden too and church when she would stray,
The angels sought with Joan earth's gem to be.
She languished like a bitten rose in May
If angry from her they like morn should flee,
That leaves the flowering mead, parched 'neath the sun's
hot sea.

—42—

As crushed by Fate she wept most bitter tears;
For when they went it was no longer day.
And blue seas brooded round night's silver spheres.
So fond was she and fashioned to their sway
She longed for them to carry her away.
Alas! How near death brings it us to think
That the pyre's flame must light the awful way
For Joan to join her friends, and whirling sink
Into eternity, from time's red flaming brink.

—43—

Now Joan transformed was on her mission bent,
And far from human haunts she strayed: her friends
Were spirits and she wore a beauty lent
By God at times, for high and holy ends—
A heavenly grace that heart of granite rends.
Men wondered if they were diseased in mind—
Obedient when on them her eye she bends
For gallant grown magnificent refined,
She sparkles like a gem, in wildering Afric mined.

—44—

Her conduct to her friends, as Greek, seemed strange;
And loving her they sought their grief to tame,
Lest it their deep affection should derange.
She answered to the old familiar name,
And like trained birds, at once responding came.
Anon, she'd steal away to join her saints,
Who lingered long without reviling blame.
If then Domremy murmurs rending plaints
The shaft wounds not young Joan, themselves alone it
taints.

JOAN OF ARC.

—45—

Alas! this meant that she must leave her home—
Leave all the birds and beasts she loved so well—
Leave village maids with whom she used to roam,
And worst of all her mother Isobel:
And go away with warriors tried to dwell
Whose lips were steeped with blasphemies perverse,
And hands did deeds too terrible to tell.
Could she upon her head bring blacker curse
Except to leap from cliff, and confined be in hearse?

—46—

What Joseph could interpret this weird dream?
Jacques D'Arc knew all his daughter's daring plans—
Saw Orleans' siege where curdling terrors teem:
Nay, will lay on his lily-bell rude hands,
And drown her if she joins marauding bands
That roam the countryside. She was confused
And terrified like skiff in Goodwin's sands.
Her brothers with the drama were amused:
Not so her mother's heart, that had her girl perused.

—47—

Romance has often opened wide the door
That's barred, as with the iron in earth's crust,—
Love's bolted prison, and off the beams tore:
She in dame Isobel flung all her trust.
A model Joan was for the marble bust:
Praxitiles could never boast he had
A form more beautiful. Madame will thrust
Into the yawning breach a peasant lad
To woo and win young Joan, and make Domremy glad.

—48—

But the young swain, of maids was a poor judge;
For, failing, he fetched her to court at Toul,
To feed with fulminations his sore grudge.
Dishonesty in oaths argues the fool:
For retribution wields a keen ferule;
Pursuing malice to the utmost seas.
Now here adversity took the youth to school:
For Joan once roused would fight like angry bees;
She pleaded her own cause, like a Demosthenes.

—49—

She was now free: but this novitiate
 Of torture, like a heroine withstood,
 Steeled her for the fierce tragedy of Fate.
 "Daughter of God go forth" gave her the mood
 Of exaltation—daily her sole food.
 She now had conquered earthly hope and love:
 And could, like spirits, tread the field and flood
 To fight for France, e'en buttressed from above,
 Till victory's angel perch, on France' flag like a dove.

—50—

The hour has struck. How can brave Joan conceal
 Her wildering joy? Her aunt has fallen ill:
 And friends 'twixt fear and faith fret for her weal;
 Though birth and death are of God's holy will.
 Now she alone in Domremy has skill
 In nursing. Eager she must not appear;
 Suspicion thus, like wolves, would all hearts fill.
 They send her forth her eyes like crystal clear
 Yet buried in her heart, lay her mind like a bier.

—51—

As they trudge on young Joan unveils her heart:
 " 'Twas prophesied France ruined by a dame
 Should rise restored by village maid." Laxart
 The nonce suffused was, with the fires of shame,
 Fearing for Joan and for her spotless fame:
 But reasoned soon; "If woman this must do,
 No one with man's flesh clothed has better claim
 Than Joan." Then she began like love to sue:
 "Bring me to Beaudricourt"; he did as the birds flew.

—52—

The warrior and the maiden that day met:
 Joan dowered by Fate to Vaucoleur was brought:
 She owed to France delivery, as a debt,
 Hence Beaudricourt, like starving wolves, had sought.
 The burly Captain knowing thing of naught
 "Would box her ears" for fancy's foolishness;
 But by her fascination he was caught
 And softened. She was strong though in distress;
 For God had called her forth, she knew He'd her cause
 bless.

—53—

Now Beaudricourt by Joan's enchantment changed,
Regards the child with solemn sweet aspect;
Nor will he be by gods or men estranged
From such a prodigy—God's own elect.
"The cause of France though tottering is not wrecked,
This maid is sent to have the Dauphin crowned.
I will the flower," said he, "of France collect
Where warriors brave like stars at night abound."
De Metz and Coligny, leaped out as from the ground.

—54—

Then humbly Beaudricourt asked Joan to show
Who was the Lord that sent her into France;
Where war, disease and death like poppies grow.
The maiden importuned, with smiling glance
Relieved his doubting soul like surgeon's lance.
Thus Joan replied: "The God of Heaven and earth;
And He, like stag for stream, to help us pants."
Sir Robert saw the world held not her worth:
At once like a sunrise, hope had a glorious birth.

J O A N O F A R C.

CANTO III.

—1—

Joan came; the poppies seemed to bow
In every mead like waves that curl and yeast;
Adoring the red rose in sister's brow,
For they had often met at wedding feast.
The nonce war from his horrid revel ceased
In sympathy with the joy of the flowers.
E'en Beaudricourt saw in the blushing east
The rising sun that gilded all his towers
And filled his heart like morn, with Herculean powers.

—2—

Now green-eyed jealousy this morn would ban.
Yet people teem like torrents round the Maid;
Vosges mountaineers are patriots to a man
And rush down like a freshet to the glade
As if to swell the Meuse. The gay and staid,
Like swarming bees that emigrate in crowds,
To Vaucoleur flock: they leave tools and trade
To see the wondrous woman from the clouds
Like manna on France dropped, when famine France
enshrouds.

—3—

De Metz was anxious; he loved well his king,
Nor wished by witch's wiles to be abused.
He was for France an albatross on wing,
When fortune on war's bloody cascades cruised,
And watched his gates if she the tides had loosed.
France needs help hurried even from the sky;
For Albion has hell's Harpies all produced.
"Shall we," he cried, "stand idly here and sigh?
No! let us grasp Joan's hand, and like great 'Titans try."

—4—

De Metz was nature's and France' nobleman.
He saw that Joan like Jove with a grim nod,
Would conquer all within life's brittle span.
His words "what dost thou here" were cruel rod,
But Joan for France would be an Ichabod.
She answered: "I would spin by mother's side;
But now though I am only mortal clod
My mission I must state: I'm going to ride
By mid-Lent to the King, the Lord wills it—my guide."

—5—

Once in the toil of Joan's grace De Metz swore
With God's high help to fetch her to the King;
Cost it his life congealing his heart's gore.
But Beaudricourt, like bees when best they sing,
Concealed 'neath honeyed words his deadly sting.
His men like trembling marshes quake with fear
And to their lord like drowning sailors cling.
The Maid straight pierced their perfidy's cloak; a tear
Full oft dimmed her bright eyes, as clouds the burning
sphere.

—6—

The while she acts with angels' charity.
Lorraine at Nancy lies—is mortally ill.
He might as well ask her to walk at sea
As seek from artless Joan the surgeon's skill.
Why then her pilgrimage? Curb his dark will
And waken love for his poor exiled spouse:
As well roll Vosges' green mountains off their sill?
Yet she did stupor in this stone arouse
To feel the subtle force of piety and vows.

—7—

He gave her geld. What motive? Was't her cause?—
The cause of France choked in the coil of Fate?
Let speculation pass! Now she will pause
And pray where keeps the shrine at Nancy's gate:
Yet Vaucoleur's impatient peasants wait—
And jealous Beaudricourt to death annoy—
Their eyes on Joan's majestic mien to sate;
For she was comely and their hearts could cloy
With exaltation pure, contagion of her joy.

—8—

Tumultuous runs the tide when driving winds,
Eolus' agents, heave his legions on:
So people, like a herd of frightened hinds
In panic, rush; or mists before the dawn.
All care and caution for the nonce is gone:
Like hyperborean storm they roar them hoarse;
And what they wish that mantle you must don.
E'en Robert Beaudricourt could not divorce
This idol from their hearts, no more than tides from
course.

—9—

Was it the crashing of the spheres that wrung
Capitulation from Joan's haughty foe;
Or Bertrand's and John's faith that mortally stung
His chivalry? She dealt his doubts a blow,
When clear as sunrise she began to show
To the magicians of his castle court
The falling stars of fatal overthrow;
For breathless post on post came the report
Of Rouvray's shameful rout, and siege of Orleans' fort.

—10—

Enthusiasm bides not banks of sense,
But flows like freshets in wild wanton ways:
And generosity the heart contents,
That pays us all for perishable bays.
Now Vaucoleur with slender purse defrays
The charger's cost caparisoned in mail.
Mars jealous of her grand steed fell to gaze
And feared his serried armies must needs fail;
'Gainst Joan armed like a god, Goliaths e'en are frail.

—11—

See yonder grass-grown plot hardby the church,
Where hillocks low heave o'er graves all around,
And weeping willows from the bleak winds lurch!
E'en there would Jacques D'Arc in the cold damp ground
Have Joan interred rather than with bays bound
In battle won. No longer do men greet
Him with their wonted smile; his deep heart-wound
Forbids: nor willingly do they him meet
But seek some by-way out, or unfrequented street.

—12—

He scowled like winter's biting blast at Joan:
His priceless pearl—creator of his fame,
The treasure of his house. Could he well loan
To infamy so much—his daughter? Name!
Men risk the duel rather than nurse shame.
The woman Isobel—the mother, read
Her girl as no one else could do—no blame
Her darling e'er deserved. Her heart, her head,
Her life, she'd give and all, for Joan or living or e'en dead.

JOAN OF ARC.

—13—

Jacques dreams Joan masquerading meets the King
And mingles with the mannikins at court;
Whose circle—Satan's sanctuary ring—
Surrounds young Charles like rampart round a fort:—
A treacherous honor fathoms deep. Report
Speaks scornfully of this nomadic prince—
A cavalier king unchivalric in port.
Like Joseph warned, Jacques would no moment mince;
Pierre he sends to Joan, who'll not in dangers wince.

—14—

Now Isobel—with the good mother's heart—
Who exorcized Joan's tainted memory—
Its injured honor, with her gems did part;
If she might rinse the night from Fate's decree.
The mother would prescribe a remedy
For all the ills that seep into camp life:
Pierre in darkest jungle clear would see
The wolves that wanton where'er war was rife
And sear them with his eye; if need be with his knife.

—15—

The twenty-fourth of February was
The day, Joan marched Fate's heroine or dupe:
The season and the route had given pause
To Mars e'en, buttressed with her banal troop.
Joan faced by war and winter did not droop.
'Twas disobedience stung; she bravely asked
Her father's pardon. But he too must stoop—
Obey God's will. She in His service basked,
And must not more deceive; so she her aims unmasked.

—16—

At Vaucoleur Leroyer was her host;
Who would have Joan with robes of rainbow clad
Could he the sun's bright palette steal. His boast
Was that she housed with him. She looked a lad
With hair cut round and cheeks with roses glad.
She rode her raven palfry from his door
Through aisles of men with admiration mad,
Who cared not if Joan mantle of morn wore;
She went to dry the sea, of France's rolling gore.

—17—

De Beaudricourt gallant had buckled on
Joan's suit of mail. De Metz and Couigny
Rode by her side, and they had scarcely won
The highroad when they heard what seemed a sea,
So surging came wild cheers o'er silent lea.
Through a portcullis called the Port of France
They had defiled and like the honey-bee
Or humming birds that in the sunlight glance
They made straight for the King, at Chinon's quaint old
manse.

—18—

"Away then Joan let come what may": his word
Rang clear as hunter's horn o'er mount and moor.
He belted on her hip a swashing sword—
Did this grim minion of Mars, Beaudricourt;
Against men drawn by beauty's love and lure.
Through forests dense, high hills, and valleys deep,
The cavalcade rode on, only secure
When night Burgundians drugged with dreaming sleep.
E'en then dressed Joan in mail, 'gainst dangers deserts
keep.

—19—

"God speed her! bless her! grant her luck and love!"
The pious peasants most devoutly prayed:
"Give her arm strength and skill ye heavens above!
And prowess to meet panthers unafraid!
Angels of grace preserve our sweet young maid!"
As meteors might she rushed out sword in hand:
But fiends this Deborah brave of Meuse delayed;
Who snapped like mad dogs at her magic wand,
That turned the tides of war, back from France' sunny land.

—20—

From Lorraine to Touraine is many a league
And ambuscades mine all the treacherous way.
O' nights they march, nor 'bove a whisper speak;
'Twas death to dare the dangers of the day.
Nine hundred miles! Chinon is far away!
Off there prince Charles preparing for the fall
Of Orleans, stands like hunted stag at bay;
And o'er him hangs in folds the funeral pall—
The clouds of destiny, as o'er skiffs April squall.

—21—

They halted at St. Urban's in Champagne
At nightfall, as day lost his lingering flame,
When whippoorwills their evening carols sang;
And lowing kine from pastures homeward came.
The morn soon broke; to hear Mass was her aim:—
Accomplished, she set out through the broad belt
Burgundian, fierce February's fame
For floods despite. Inclemencies they felt
Of winter's blighting blast, nor would prayer snowdrifts
melt.

—22—

Next night no friendly hearth invites the troop;
They sleep all armed 'neath osier thickets' pall.
The warmth of fire wanes. Were they Fate's dupe?
Alas! the sun is now a muffled ball;
Cimmerian darkness dims the eyes of all.
Couligny and De Metz seem heralds poor
Whose eyeless armies will in ambush fall.
But brave Joan could a sea of woes endure—
An Amazon whose grace lit all the gloomy moor.

—23—

"Be not afraid, from Paradise will come
My brothers," said she, "they'll tell what to do
E'en we by federated ills are numb;
Or blasted on the heath by hell's own crew."
No longer mutineers their daggers drew,
But towards Chinon, when blazed the stars, they rode;
No bugle blast at dawn reveille blew
Revealing to the world their night's abode,
While they pursued their way, far from the ambushed road.

—24—

In Druid's grove they matins sang; no Mass
Could the Maid hear. Her angels came with bread
Of consolation in that Alpine pass
Of winter snows, and yet her heart oft bled
For wayfarers unpillowed and unfed;
Whom she gave food, as parents baby birds.
De Metz was beggared; her gold soon had fled;
She loved to lavish gifts and gracious words
On peasants who swarmed round, like hungry flocks and
herds.

—25—

At length gleam bright the waters of Loire
 To Joan, who wandered c'er unkindly ways
 Far from the paths that the Burgundians bar.
 Glitters Gien in the sun's setting rays;
 The band rejoice that it King Charles obeys.
 To see young Joan, rush out the citizens,
 As rush spring streams that soil pure silvery bays;
 For they had dared bogs, marshes, moors and fens,
 As in unequal war, the hawk dared by the wrens.

—26—

Orleans beleaguered hears of Merlin's maid
 Who from Lorraine's meandering Meuse had come
 To their relief with Michael's shining blade;
 Though with inclemencies of winter numb:
 To strike their wretchedness with God's Love dumb,
 Who wildly had beseeched His help and grace.
 Now Orleans beats like Jove the rolling drum,
 And Albion's fears through bulging eyeballs gaze;
 For mountains faint and fall, when Joan attacks their base.

—27—

For grace, Joan goes from Gien to Fierbels,
 Where lay St. Catharine's shrine hardby Chinon;
 From God through prayer His awful aid to draw
 She hears three Masses. Living faith and strong
 Will storm the citidel of heaven 'gainst wrong,
 That locked her out from the Lord's sacrifice—
 His table and the angels' sanctus song.
 St. Catharine's sword gave seal to Joan's emprise;
 'Twas given to her by God, and was her hope's sunrise.

—28—

The King, on ballets beat the hunt and masks,
 Unwilling is to rive with forks of care
 His callow time that in youth's sunshine basks;
 Yet Orleans lost he must with lions lair.
 Now into Chinon Joan crept unaware,
 For the stars' lamp was out. Eleven nights and days
 She trudged along where only demons dare:
 To help France live and Orleans siege to raise
 She came to trembling Charles, like noonday's dazzling
 blaze.

—29—

This pirouetting prince is wreathed in sleep:
The fastness of his fortress on the hill,
With moat and rampart, midnight dragons keep;
And sentries armed with steely poignards, will
Incontinently the incautious kill,
Who wander lightly near the great domain.
But Joan though soldier, sought not so to fill
A potter's grave, and with vile worms to reign;
Forso her mission's mount, she'd fail by death to gain.

—30—

By day 'twas busy as a hive or mart
Within the walls where action his home kept:
Beyond, life pulsed as when first lovers part;
Nor was there one or awkward or inept,
But like the beaver in their arts adept.
Round Chinon castle—now a classic ruin—
O'er which night's eyes their silvery dew have wept
'Twas ever feverish as Sol at high noon
And rudely shamed away, the glimpses of the moon.

—31—

Under its frowning fort the Vienne flows—
A sparkling jewel 'neath the jealous sun;
Disturbing neither pastime nor repose:
Thus peaceful as a prayerful palefaced nun,
Its waters through Touraine agardening run.
And in the landscape of Loire hardby
Lambs play and poppies bloom as they have done
For centuries now; and purple vineyards nigh
Plant ravening desire in English vikings' eye.

—32—

Within the castle perfumes fill the air;
And fresh flowers massed like Florida the eye
Delight: yet festooned hanging lair on lair
They languish like e'en finite spheres and die.
Cerulean is Charles' court as the blue sky,
When stars its ocean fleck with myriad sail;
That traffic there when no storm lowers nigh.
The walls ancestors hold, though now they fail,
For canvas cannot breathe, e'en decked in mimic mail.

—33—

The prince is the Hyperion of his hall,
But dimly shines with flickering yellow light;
He is the rightful heir, yet heavens fall
He will not, like Guesclin, go forth to fight.
There courtezans and cavaliers keep the plight
Of this poor parlous jade so insecure:
They must dance with this unanointed wight
To luscious lute while fortune's smiles endure;
Like hunters all will die, if caught in sinking moor.

—34—

But others there keep state: Marie Anjou
Consoled by sweet Yolande of Arragon—
Her mother. State! fie on the state! adieu
To pomp and life and all! Oh, to be gone
Where death puts worms his horrid mantle on!
The bird that's caged is blighted for awhile,
Who has of reason no discourse. Anon,
And use will its imprisonment beguile;
But reason fumes and frets, and floods its banks like Nile.

—35—

The court e'en, conscious was of heaven's grace;
Lorraine would send her David—Joan the Maid:
It languished for a glimpse at her sweet face,
Whose angels would bring France supernal aid.
Charles' desperation now through fire would wade,
Or face with fingers the lean tiger's claws:
He'd fly to sorcery e'en the heavens forbade,
And leap into Inferno's open jaws;
Though prudence clamored still, to follow nature's laws.

—36—

These women listened to Joan's maiden plea,
Marie and Yolande gave faith to the Maid;
Came she from earth, blue sky, or sunny sea
They welcomed her as heaven's happy aid.
But Tremouille and Chartres statesmen and staid
Suspecting her an imp of tempting hell
Opposed Joan; and titanic efforts made
To win back Burgundy from purpose fell
Of fratricidal war, and have him in love dwell.

—37—

Orleans beleaguered taught Charles to reflect
Upon the death of Burgundy. The soul
Of France from Hades back had just been beckt,
When it was sent blood-boltered to the pole
By murder. Had Charles worn the pure white stole
Of innocence the fates were forced to bow:
But Nemesis dogs him to take her toll
When lo! Joan knocks heart-bound with holy vow
To save poor dying France, and diadem Charles' brow.

—38—

Unworthy Charles prized naught; for Isobel
Had poisoned all his deeps of memory:
She was an incarnation dark and fell
Of spirits that were born in hell's vile sea.
At Troyes surrendered she the kingdom's key,
Dethroning Charles in that he was not heir.
The cancer that ate Charles was in his birth,
Therefore he'll love Marie like gem most rare.
Not so! Agnes he loved, his spouse lived in a lair.

—39—

His jewels, if Joan chastened his birth-blot,
Would Charles give. Castles would fall 'neath her sway:
Let Joan with one stroke cut his conscience' knot;
If she could cleanse his fair escutcheon's clot,
And clear the clouded sky of France. That very day
Vendome brought frankincense and myrrh to court:
A star stood over Chinon from Cathay
As Scriptures of the Magis' tour report;
He brought to Charles fair Joan, of queenly grace and
port.

—40—

Mid-Lent in March of thirteen twenty-nine
Charles' audience hall with beauty was ablaze;
And jewels burned like Afric's diamond mine,
Whose oriental grandeur palsied praise,
And led e'en princes on their light to gaze.
Poor little Joan! It was the destined night
That she was doomed a Parthenon to grace:
Her timid heart—a holocaust to fright;
The jaded court now wild, to taste this new delight.

—41—

Poor Joan! 'Twas martyrdom but she was helped
 By heaven. The Queen rejoiced that Joan was come.
 Far else La Tremouille dreamed hell had whelped.
 Exalted, Charles knew Joan would solve the sum
 Of all his sorrows but as Sphinx was dumb;
 Nay! quitted for the nonce his starry throne
 For converse midst the universal hum:
 But as Tell's arrow through the apple, Joan
 Made straight for Dauphin Charles, or as a falling stone.

—42—

The massive doors on hinges huge swung wide,
 And Vendome like a god in grace appeared,
 The little Lorraine lady by his side.
 She seemed in bearing and in beauty reared
 At court; for she was unabashed though weird:
 Her voice was silver as church chimes in tone;
 And like old wine the heart of Chinon cheered.
 Now without choice the salon needs must own,
 They never had such grace, in any creature known.

—43—

Delightful 'twas to see the little maid
 From the usurper turn as eagles glide,
 And kneel before the Dauphin. Then she said:
 "I'm sent to you from heaven's King to ride
 To far off Rheims, the while your trusty guide,
 'Fill thou'rt anointed and crowned France's King,
 As lieutenant of God. In Him confide
 And He will blessings to your kingdom bring;
 So all France peal on peal, her carillons may ring!"

—44—

The Dauphin drew the little maid aside. 'Twas strange
 To see the peasant child talk to the King
 As calmly as in garden 'twere or grange.
 Charles heard sweet cadences such as birds sing,
 Romancing as they pair in early spring.
 But first of all he heard with no alloy
 Sweet news, the like God's cherubim might bring
 Filling his heart, like June the lark, with joy:
 He was the rightful heir; God others would destroy.

—45—

Amazed was Charles at her mind's sparkling lore,
Her queenly grace, the beauty of her brow.
Till now hell's cataracts ne'er ceased to pour;
Poor churl was sinking like ships—poop and prow:
This sun cleared all the awful clouds, and now
The great blue sky he saw with boyish mirth.
But can brave Joan his feeble clay endow
With heroism? Qualities with birth
Come. Can he e'en thus late, be crowned with kingly
worth?

—46—

Was Joan a prophetess, or did she read
The tablets of the heart? The statesman clearly sees
The seeds of time far back in history's bed.
"I'll lead you to your crowning if you please,"
Said she, "e'en hand to you our kingdom's keys.
Poor Charles at this from cliff to valley fell;
Alas, to leave the flowers and honeybees!
No one could see, no one could timely tell
What winding course he'd take, if not the road to hell.

—47—

Charles needs must have a sign. The Maid then told
Him secret things that none save angels knew;
He prized Joan now as Midas prized his gold.
He gave to her the Ballins tried and true
As hosts at Couldray Castle. Very few
M'ight enter there, though on Olympus bred;
Where all the gods bathe nightly in heaven's dew.
She shared their bounty and their daughter's bed,
Who, song and story sing, would die in the Maid's stead.

—48—

The King in blindness stumbled o'er the bluff.
Jacques Gelu and Regnault de Chartres opposed
The visionary's dreams with sterner stuff.
Needs must the King submit for they composed
The crumbling arch of France. To be imposed
On by a witch the generals all refused.
Thus Joan's high aims conspiracy foreclosed:
Charles fell a mass of bones and blood abused;
Yet he for once unleashed the dogs of strife and loosed.

—49—

Like light Poitier's decision to Charles flew:
 The news sweet as June winds that o'er meads blow.
 The doctors all, France' gallant saviours grew:
 Joan pure as lilies was and bolted snow.
 Then knights taught her the arrow and the bow—
 To guide her charger in the gambling tilt—
 War's image pale wherein the desperate foe
 Must wax like Phoebus or like Dian wilt;
 As gladiator's arm, a general must be drilled.

—50—

Pythagoras then spoke true, for Ceasar's soul,
 Come from some star, burned in brave Joan of Arc;
 That guided her as mariner does the pole,
 And made her of the tottering state bulwark.
 As sunrise was her cheer, when sings the lark,
 Where'er she was 'neath heaven's canopy.
 To her commands e'en mutiny deaf did hark;
 She fell in fight, like equinoctial sea
 Upon the mizzen-mast, of the 'mazed enemy.

—51—

D'Alencon, Joan, of war the mysteries taught.
 That she might cheat of prize the bully, Fate.
 Orleans' duke, long with fetters fearful fraught,
 Lay languish'g as he gazed through the grate
 Upon the huge forbidding iron gate.
 A warrior, once her art known, she resolved,
 But all in vain, to give him back his state;
 And as the dial of time its hands revolved
 She never for a nonce the bootless task absolved.

—52—

A favorite was D'Alencon of the Maid:
 A victim of Mars, young though he. His fate
 Seemed sealed at Verneuil, and he long decayed
 In dungeon's horrid cell. His honor's rate
 Ran high: nor would accept he Henry's bait;
 But bought his liberty dear with ransom's fine
 So huge that hunger since barked at his gate.
 He seemed a mighty giant in decline;
 And none so sorely spent, would rush back in Mars' line.

J O A N O F A R C .

—53—

Joan's goodness, like the gods', won confidence:
D'Alencon joined her, like De Metz, at once;
At St. Florent he fowling was; pretence
He willed not, so he hurried from the hunts:
Where convalescing he had been the nonce;
To welcome with a tropic's warmth the Maid.
And grasp France' sword that every treason blunts.
"You're welcome D'Alencon" La Pucelle said,
"Through seas of Albion's gore, with you alone I'd wade."

—54—

Six weeks' delay! it irks her much! Chinon
And Poitiers are consulting: and the sum
Of their enquiry is one siren song
Of sweetest praise that strikes detraction dumb;
Nor leaves the state a consolation's crumb.
E'en wisdom had her mightiest interest here:
She knew what calumny coarse through men would come
To burn like living lime, her memory sear;
The books of Poitiers then were worth all India's gear.

—55—

To Chinon back like morn comes Joan; the King
Awaits the Council's words like sea-sunrise
And truly quails and manna him they bring.
The judges say—as Solons they were wise—
That all suspicions are incipient lies.
The King in ecstasies sends forward Joan
To'seiged Orleans, that waits her from the skies.
She came like Jupiter frm his blue zone;
And all the English watched, as she were sulphurous stone.

JOAN OF ARC.

CANTO IV.

—1—

The die is cast; Joan's hour now strikes; the war
Drives like an equinoctial storm. She goes
To Tours; her mail is there; 'twas worn by Thor.
Not David-like with sling meets she her foes;
But armed with sword, the thorn beneath the rose.
Her captains ride like Caesars at her side,
And seas of soldiers surge in endless rows;
She is their queen, their sweatheart, and their pride;
Nay, is of history's page the poetry and pride.

—2—

The town of Tours sleeps on the silver Loire;
That nurses Orleans near, where it runs blue—
A burning orb in the dark night of war.
As with the hand of God of Albion's crew,
There, like Sennacherib, Joan legions slew:
Ere marching to Orleans thence, she had traced
Her flag, as picturesque as ever flew;
Where heaven and earth on silk were interlaced
The symbols of her faith, on which her hopes were based.

—3—

'Twas made of pure white silk and linen fine:
With silver threads was sewn there fleur-de-lis,
As dainty as brought from Nebraska mine;
Where sat the Saviour on a cloud-swept sea.
The globe lay in His hands of flagree;
While angels offer lilies of bell-dress
With written rarely 'neath, Jesu, Marie.
The crown of France now sullen with distress,
Lies on the other side, that God the symbol bless.

—4—

The Dauphin orders armor for the Maid,
That wakens cocks secure in robes of night;
Who matins sing as when the shadows fade:
So Joan be gem that chivalry would blight;
For she must fitly Albion's flower fight.
D'Alencon, his black charger Joan presents,
That cheers her heart, as does the dawning light:
And wonderful it was when she rode thence;
Her banner floating o'er the multitude immense.

JOAN OF ARC.

—5—

She found by miracle her jewelled sword:
One morn absorbed in prayer at Fierbois
An angel in her mind a vision poured,
Where plait, as meadows pied with pink, she saw
A scabbard buried in earth's awful maw.
The clergy ope the ponderous marble tomb
And forth from midst the bleaching bones they draw
Damascus blade, that once would break night's gloom—
The symbol of her strength, the sign of Albion's doom.

—6—

Success had eloquence, that soon convinced
France, Joan was sent her ship of state to keel.
But Charles blessed with LaPucelle's victory winced;
Though she the cancer in his birth did heal;
Nay, fought with life in hand for France's weal.
All Tours embrace her with angelic zest:
Its yeomanry beneath her banners steal.
The English fight against doom's frank request,
Though blazoned in the sky, they see but plague and pest.

—7—

She loved her knightly sword at Fierbois found,
A precious relic mouldering in earth's womb;
For rescued once from the cold, clammy ground,
'Twas an avenging angel in God's room—
A symbol sealed of Albion's day of doom.
Squire D'Aulon brandished it like burning brand
Dangers to cleave at noonday, or night's gloom:
The standard only, she waved in her hand
Which was to Albion's eye, a wicked witch's wand.

—8—

Girl that she was, her flag she dearly loved;
Embroidered silk and satin glossed with gold:
Nay, e'er if steel with richest plush were gloved
No woman would it as heart's treasure hold.
Intoxicated with her cause, and bold
Like Deborah brave with Sisera's head in hand,
She did at old Rouen the truth unfold:
That she full forty times, loved more her wand
Than Fierbois' jewelled sword, e'en it won back her land.

JOAN OF ARC.

—9—

France' fiery captains by Mars' minions bruised
Reck't not of serried ranks, nor spears nor guns:
Yet consternation rapt, they still refused
To see a maid, where blood torrential runs;
And culverin's mouth let loose missiles in tons.
The heroes of the madding martial field
Abashed at Joan were, as at midnight suns;
Yet their command to witch, will never yield.
How little did they know, their fate by Joan was sealed!

—10—

Magnificent and matchless Joan's high mien:
Like fire from flint she Albion's envy draws!
She is the generalissimo, nay queen
Of all her armies; yet knows naught of laws
Of strategy. It will give history pause
To sing: A child hurled Albion out of France,
Who was the incarnation of its cause,
Knowing the times to loiter and advance;
Their frontals, feints and flanks, she read with but a glance.

—11—

History is mute, likewise is poetry.
Sane men and sensible, ran mad like deer!
A sorceress Joan appeared! the honeybee
Like arrow speeding, never yet did steer
So straight a homing from the flowery lea.
The coal black steed, the wight, nymph of the sea;
The silver helmet and gold breastplate, must
Have blinded them outright; they all agree
She is from Satan sent; nor will they trust
The gods of doubtful war, fearing to drink the dust.

—12—

On route, or canvas canopied, Joan had
Her household; Raymond and Sire de Conte were
Her pages; D'Aulon virtue-mailed was glad
To fling the banner o'er her of his care;
Were she or serving Mars or God in prayer.
Poulegny and Metz were her errant-knights;
And John her brother wore a father's air;
For tooth of calumny horrid, keenly bites
Or granite steel or brass, knowing no wrongs or rights.

J O A N O F A R C.

—13—

Her heart sank syncopied, when Pierre came;
He was Domremy's blessing, and the voice
Of parents' pardon. Rainbow-like her fame
Delighted them; they knew she was God's choice,
Once more to win for France all freedom's joys.
Pierre a hostage is of their good will—
The Benjamin of Jacques' remaining boys
To his Joan sent, riving her heart with thrill
That hides not from Pierre the love she would not kill.

—14—

Nay, Isobel's fond blessing he brought her;
And God's best gift, Fra Pasquerel—a friend,
Whom death with terrors armed, could not deter
From standing on her pyre. How kind to send
This man of God to Joan! One can depend
On mothers. Isobel, this saintly priest
Had importuned, her darling to attend,
Snatched by the whirlpool where wars yeast;
And aid her in death's lair, disarming the fell beast.

—15—

A confessor and chaplain too! few maids
Did God grant guardians such o'er earth's 'lorn way
To guide them! Holy Church gives gracious aids
To saints in need. Citeaux, Nicholas, Romee,
Had angels given to Joan to help her pray.
Dame Isobel the demons all would ban
From Joan, and hold things worse than wolves away.
A brother and a cousin from the clan
Sent she with Joan along, her safety well to man.

—16—

Thus dyked against besieging seas of life,
She sets out Caesar-like to save Orleans.
E'en now appear the threatening clouds of strife,
That lower like Erebus o'er peaceful scenes:
But they still buttress her—France' powerful queens
Yolande, Marie; D'Alencon with La Hire
The secrets of the maid from day's eye screens;
While she a comet, searches far and near
For fiery men-at-arms, that scorn the name of fear.

—17—

The prophet is like eagles, strong and free;
 And soars above man's wisdom in his words:
 So Merlin, like the albatross at sea,
 Is far above the shot of human herds.
 Yet La Tremouille, with the Burgundian, girds
 His loins to meet Joan, the adventuress,
 With treachery of the turbaned Turks or Kurds;
 And so avert a desert of distress.
 But Joan will win her cause, the fates themselves confess.

—18—

"Fie! fie!" cried they, "let's cut these briar shoots!
 Away with witches! we must fairies ban:
 Else 'twere to pluck the bald oak by the roots,
 And plant the rose or lily in the van.
 Fanatics wild and weird with time began:
 Like locusts desperation their ilk breeds;
 Strange pest pretending to save dying man.
 We'll kill the cancer—burn its budding seeds,
 And sear the heart of France, that unto death now bleeds."

—19—

Avails it nought to fight against the Fates:
 De Beaudricourt and Dauphin both fall down,
 Like walls of Jericho and its brass gates,
 When angels blew their trumpets o'er the town.
 La Tremouille and Chartres in ermine gown
 Fix firm their shoulders 'gainst the rising tide:
 They challenge Charles to wear LaPucelle's crown;
 Or on to Rheims like Alexander ride,
 When city gates fell down, in spite of power and pride.

—20—

The first that saw Joan's star was plain Jacques Coeur,
 Who had like Midas, mines of gold amassed.
 The earth e'en rocks with fear when nations stir,
 Like seas that nod and curtsy in the blast.
 Now thousands, gold like hoards of Croesus, cast
 Into Jean's deep exchoquer—war's great nurse.
 Yet Jacques was bastion of Joan to the last;
 Though Charles damned him—ingrate—with many a curse,
 Nay! sacrificed his friend, to exiles' alien hearse.

J O A N O F A R C.

—21—

Five weeks move on as slow as glaciers march;
Marshal deBussac holds the high command;
Saintrailles La Hire and he, keystone the arch.
Battalions picked, with culverin batteries manned,
Advance in waves to help 'sieged Orleans tand;
Where wolves of hunger and despair appal.
The garrison there a gnarled and grizzly band,
Fighting 'gainst death, resolve alone to fall;
Like eagles foraging, while famished eaglets call.

—22—

Now on to Blois! the convoy is ahead.
Beside Joan, Chartres and Gaucourt guard the clan.
The twenty-fifth of April, the troops, led
Like destiny. Their spirited elan
Was like the steeds of night passing Dian;
Hyperion or, as he leaps in the sea.
The people swarmed, driven by Eolus' fan,
Enrolling as by Herod's stern decree;
For Joan like Jove would rive the oaks of Englishry.

—23—

At Blois Joan alchemized the basest brass;
The art that ages sought in vain she found.
The soldiers steeped in sea of morals crass
She hoisted high on virtue's solid ground;
God's grace must in their consciences abound.
The legions that will conquer at Orleans
Like Michael's ranks to God must all be bound.
Look heaven! look earth! did eye e'er view like scenes—
An army clothed in steel, fight first with moral means.

—24—

Obedience is the child of faith and love.
In ecstasy Joan's men now shout them hoarse:
For they acclaim her goddess from above,
With them in Mars' fierce errantry to course:
As the ambassadress of heaven she was the source
Of all war's strength in arms; and so they changed
Their livery—suits of sloth and sin. This force
Did steel their powers; like giants pure they ranged
With felling force of grace, and Englishry deranged.

JOAN OF ARC.

—25—

Fra Pasquerel had fashioned, as Joan bade,
A flag recalling Calvary and the cross.
There, morn and eve, priests fervently upbraid,
Lest sinners fall where fires eternal toss.
They shrive and lo! the gold has now no dross.
Then psalms and hymns and canticles they sing
To God the giver of all good; He was
the friend of France—would draw from her the pang,
That had a hundred years been biting like a fang.

—26—

Now blasphemies and oaths like fancies die;
Indecencies too plunge into hell's flames,
Where worshippers at Venus' altars fly,
To hide from Joan's pure eyes their putrid names.
Religion, license with its orgy, tames;
And demons fear its exorcising power,
That men from sin's abysmal deep reclaims.
If then worms lurk in both life's fruit and flower
Let's cherish its pure gem, that rust cannot devour.

—27—

Thus Henry honoring God, rode o'er France' corse,
With Albion's arms in martyrs' red arrayed.
They could the charter of his cause endorse,
For he a model was and with them prayed.
Dunois a brave and gallant man essayed
To lead France' phalanxes, with valor steeled,
To victory: but she fluttering fled afraid;
For God and right were not writ on their shield:
Nay, torn with factions' fangs, they naught else could but
yield.

—28—

The Dauphin's captains fought like demons do:
E'en Scythians were as fierce as Armagnacs;
Who like old oaks by fighting stronger grew.
They're diamonds in defence, flint in attacks,
Enduring as the day that never slacks;
Yet without God, or grace, or high design.
But when midway the bridge it sags and cracks;
They hear a thunderbolt or there's no sign:
But now Joan's voice commands, and thrills with power
divine.

—29—

Joan came from heaven to lead as angels can.
How these hard Christian savages revere
The innocent! The martial Maid's elan
Burst on their sight like some nymph of the sea—
A saintly fragile soul, like vase of flagree;
With all the full blown beauty of the spring.
What wonder if Mars longed the Maid to see!
How shocked yet when she rushed in his red ring;
Where men are slain like lambs, or eagles on the wing!

—30—

The Maid was now the oriflamme of France:
Her men would march through fire, if there she led;
Or 'gainst great guns that vomit death, advance:
To far Jerusalem they would go, instead
Of 'sieged Orleans. It might be bitter bread
At first, but soon obedience were a feast.
An army of hyenas were no dread:
It only had their courage thrice increased;
That waxed in shock of war, as billows wind-struck yeast.

—31—

Their route lay' long Loire. At the dawn's break
They marched away, Fra Pasquerel at their head,
With flag that danced like waves out on the lake;
Showing the cross where Christ for them had bled.
Now as they forward like the arrow sped
They all sang out the "Veni Creator":
The Holy Ghost invoking there to tread;
To quell the army ills that all abhor
And sanctify their souls, if they should die in war.

—32—

'Twas spring, the darling of the wrinkled year;
And April's lovely laces fringed all France.
Lorraine was living still; 'twas not the bier
That Flanders was. 'Twas like a first romance.
And Joan like Phoebus at the dawn, did dance
To ride away an Amazon to war.
Along the swollen river they advance:
Nor meet they English or Burgundian bar;
Who sense a sorceress hid, in the lines of Loire.

—33—

The banks were beautiful; the countryside!
'Twas a mosaic of grass and grain and trees;
The willow and the walnut fellows bide;
The poplar and the aspen never cease
To curtsy, be it time of war or peace.
The river in his majesty grand here rolls;
For all the distant hillsides give increase.
The towering mountains wear eternal stoles;
And look like solemn priests, incensing the far poles.

—34—

What pageantry was this the peasants saw?
Was it the Sacraments brought to the slain,
With canopy and candles to the law:
Or sacred psalmody with sweet refrain—
Procession interceding God for rain,
Led forth by surpliced priests and acolytes?
Nay, this moved on like billows of the main,
With men-at-arms performing sacred rites
Of Mars, which give that god, a Moloch's dark delight.

—35—

Like landslide to Loire the peasants came
To swell Joan's army. Saviour of Belle France!
Each hour invention found for her new name.
Intoxicated, swooning as in trance,
The yoemen on this sweet faced maiden glance;
And with the wings of admiration fly
Into the forms of war as they advance.
Thou hast oft heard the dying thunders sigh;
Such was their rolling cheers, as they went marching by.

—36—

High altars blazed, as blazed the blushing morn,
When friars there worshipped God at Holy Mass.
Old soldiers that at dawning since did scorn
The Sacrifice, knelt with their leader-lass;
Nor let this time of grace and unction pass.
E'en exhortation now pleased their dull ears,
That late were as impenetrable brass.
Renewed in heart the camp then wildly cheers;
And moves as cataract on, till even Loire fears.

J O A N O F A R C.

—37—

Joan still they thwart with subtle wiles, these men
Of wizardry weird, learned in the school of arms;
Where Mars is pedagogue: the puny wren
Will worry the goshawk with fond alarms;
Dunois, La Hire, draw the fang of all harms;
Avoiding quicksands and quagmires of Beauce
For Berry's friendly folk and fertile farms.
"Fie on your wisdom"! cries she; for Joan knows
Their councils' sting is death, like worms within the rose.

—38—

Les Augustines (a convent to the south,
Turned frowning fortress with steep moat and tower)
Where cannons groaning with volcano's mouth
Felched death, was clearly longer no nuns' bower.
'Twas here that Joan revealed her heaven's rich dower;
Commanding full retreat, and then to cross
Loire. Ah! 'twas for Joan a heavy hour;
For time, worlds into nothingness doth toss:
Two leagues they must return, to pass Loire's fosse.

—39—

Seven months of siege would weaken strongest heart.
At first the garrison proud like eagles stared
Proud Albion's noon and met them dart to dart:
But since Verncuil, starvation as well fared,
As they who sank and died that food be spared.
Anon from death, as Lazarus eld arose,
They came forth living; for a great light flared
Upon the west as if the sun there rose:
'Twas Joan of Arc the Maid, to melt their winter snows.

—40—

The blockade strangles like a rope the dead:
And Talbot brings his magic to the task.
Huge circling towers fill Orleans full of dread.
"What are these Babel bastiles," now all ask.
"Is it in Orleans' beauty still to bask;
Or all her gardens and her lives to gore?"
Mayhap the gods make Orleans wear this mask
To veil fond famine's teeth, that mothers tore;
Till they do in good time, a thousand blessings pour.

—41—

"Chinon! can'st thou not drop down heaven's good cheer;
Orleans cries out" and send thy sparkling dews
To change to green our yellow leaf and sear
That foreign hoofs and iron chariots bruise?
Dunois' implored, with grace will fill their cruse—
A summertime will fetch them from the King;
And buttress up their sinking heart and thews.
He comes; applause to heaven its voices fling
And all the quiring spheres, for Orleans' gladness sing.

—42—

Joan and Dunois are flying towards Orleans—
Have into eagles swift and strong now turned.
In heaven, when lost souls homing come, what scenes!
In Orleans such was then the joy that burned.
What deep despair, proud Albion's hopes inurned!
Some planet in its anger caused this change—
Some star, from old Pythagoras they soon learned.
Shot down in form of woman, France to range—
A little Lorraine maid, to history weird and strange.

—43—

The sun mounts high in heaven's dome now: Dunois
Offspring of Mars has enginery and skill—
Is master of his every art and law—
Knows how these dawning doubts of armies, kill
The mind, the imagination and the will.
He suddenly attacks the tower St. Loup;
And consternation rives that stout bastille.
Till then they joyed that Orleans soon would sue
For freedom and sweet peace, that cheers like morning dew.

—44—

Dunois, the general, went the Maid to meet,
Though in his veins coursed streams of royal blood.
How honored Merlin's Maid was him to greet!
Though, peasant, princess there she proudly stood—
Come from the fastness of the Chenuwood.
"Are you Dunois," she asked. "Aye" answered he.
"Did sailor ever gain, by Fate withstood,
Without his star," cried Joan, "and brawny company?"
The general thence obeyed her littlest decree.

J O A N O F A R C.

—45—

"I bring you Heaven's sweet succor e'er besought
By Orleans," then she cried. "It pleased God
To send me with His sword, and bring to naught
Albionry, by His avenging nod:
And you would treat me as a lisping tot,
Though angels order all my rugged ways.
I am like you a sodden senseless clod;
But on my spirit ranks and squadrons gaze.
Can you not see their forms, that like a sunset blaze?"

—46—

Fortune is fickle on the fields of war.
The winds scold Loire in voices hoarse and rough;
And transports with their holds of honey, bar:
They lay a target 'neath the bank's rude bluff.
That terrible defeat—Verneuil's rebuff—
Awakes with fright, and nightmares memory:
But made are heroes not of earthly stuff;
Joan prays her angels for God's help to free
Her convoys from the rage, of perverse destiny.

—47—

As once in Galilee, she stills the waves:
Nay, sends to Orleans food in bursting boats;
And so from scorpions dread of hunger saves.
Dunois now chastened, her mind's motion notes,
And on her power angelic fondly dotes.
To Blois with Dunois she wished to retire:
But he Orleans' wild desperation quotes;
Where death devours their darlings dam and sire;
So Joan with pity moved, will enter or expire.

—48—

Joan loved her legions from the mount and glen,
By grace now lilies turned of innocence.
She feared, like furnaces, they'd cool again;
So she must feed them with her zeal intense,
Till they are strong in heart and soul and sense.
Orleans though starving, welcome poor would give
To convoys. Joan must come down riding thence
With Dunois. The young eagles in the cliff,
Without the parents there, would die with food to live.

—49—

The angry waters spurn the cleaving boats
With hoarded holds of food. They cry: "Help! help!
We perish: the Loire is at our throats."
The lion, life in hand, will aid his whelp
When madly for protection it doth yelp.
"Have patience" cried Joan, "and all will be well,"
Though even then they stranding were on kelp.
Now sudden changed the wind; still was the swell;
The English deemed it done by some witch come from hell.
hell.

—50—

Now, Orleans weeps for joy at Joan's approach:
The streets roll like a sea with men, who cried
Like children, fearful as when waves encroach
Upon an isle, where they for play abide.
Like April morn, by turns they smiled and sighed:
"The Maid! the Maid! a handmaid of the Lord
Comes on the highway of the river's pride:
The winds and waters are in one accord
To bring us goodly stores, who are His darling ward."

—51—

Confusion whirls now like a stormy sea;
The boats approach. The bastille's belching guns
Pour out dread death. "Roar on! Let be
Their best" cries Orleans, as cried bloody Huns:
And as for ribboned rainbow at eve, runs,
Sighting the boats. Then famine they forgot:
Some morning, if the sea sent forth two suns
A wilder wonder it had not begot:
So happy was the dawn of their new rising lot.

—52—

When the wells of the east run o'er with gold
At dawn, and gild the hemisphere of life
With gladness—wakes the sleeping fold
With light and heat; and ends the mortal strife
That eats the heart of sleepless couch, nay, dulls the knife
Of grief stuck in the wound of the lorn soul;
Then all the world with merriment is rife:
And so Orleans would leap from pole to pole
So pleased were they that Joan, at last reached her high
goal.

J O A N O F A R C.

—53—

Hast thou e'er seen imperial Mount Blanc?
Then other mountains are all heaving knolls
In graveyard plot. To morning still belong
The glories of that scene: then rolls
The tide of beauty that like fire enfolds
His head all horned with light. Now France is proud
Of Joan, from greatest sons apart as poles.
La Hire and Dunois wronged were by the crowd;
E'en she were angel fair, clothed with heaven's fleecy cloud.

—54—

The long day weary, faltering breathes and fast,
And death is sweet relief; it welcomes night
As hardy hunters drink the northern blast:
So Orleans welcomes Joan's supernal might.
The windows blaze into men's eyes a blight:
The city is a conflagration now;
It is a tumbling sea, turn left, turn right:
And holy nuns that never broke their vow
Of cloister, run to see, LaPucelle smile and bow.

—55—

There, enters she through Burgundy's high gate
Near the cathedral—fondling since of fame—
Called Holy Cross of Calvary: all await.
What thunder peals the organ! Jove is tame.
The dense throng rolls shaking its mighty frame,
As when the firm earth quakes. 'Tis known she'll come
To God's house first to praise His Holy Name.
The crowd like frightened fawn look, ceasing hum;
They whisper softly now, for admiration dumb.

—56—

What a reward! Behold Joan when the gate
Was oped! Then trumpets like the thunder spoke;
A thousand torches burned high heaven's pate
And boom on boom, the sleeping echoes, woke
When on the view her esquire D'Aulton broke.
The Maid in mail on her black palfry rode;
While Dunois and Boussac in marshal's cloak
Kept at her side: her brothers knightly strode
Like swans the swelling tide, unlike their Lorraine mode.

—57—

They pressed as when the people in crowds bent
 On bull-fights, 'plaud the ribboned torreador;
 And as the cavalcade through Orleans went
 The Armagnacs and English haltered war.
 It seemed some Caesar rode in triumph's car:
 The people kissed her hand—caressed her horse;
 As she were queen of Sheba from afar,
 All garish gold, as the green meadow's gorse;
 With retinue now come of Ethiopes in force.

—58—

Some torch admiring kissed her flag with fire.
 Her woman's wit flashed like the hunter's trap
 Ordering the crowd like arrows to retire;
 To drop the blazing pennant in the gap
 As suddenly as guns of Jove do snap.
 Bystanders wildered, with wild cheers endorse
 In volume as the April thunder clap.
 Then to the church she goes, dismounts her horse
 And enters to thank God, and pray for grace and force.

—59—

The journey o'er, she sought peace and repose.
 The long day she had passed sans rest or food;
 And she like lily, violet and rose,
 Sank drooping as the sun couched in the flood.
 Jacques Boucher was her honest host and good;
 Who ranged the city and the confines too
 For delicacies sweet, full many a rood.
 His princely palace wandering comets drew:
 Like Greek to golden fleece, to see Joan Orleans flew.

—60—

The Romans loved Coliseum's holiday
 Not more than Orleans did the eve when John arrived:
 For all night long they, gala as the bay,
 Rejoiced, most like the sinner lately shrived;
 Or rustic swain to a grand princess wived.
 Poor Joan dipped bread in wine and that she ate,
 Glad she the tumult had of thanks survived.
 Retiring dreamed she of dread Albion's hate
 That would like hunters, bear, her patriot's pure life bait.

J O A N O F A R C.

CANTO V.

— 1 —

Romance no more! Come grim realities!
Like ravening tigress war hunts down his prey.
Next morn from hostess Joan flies like the breeze
To Dunois, who must find some Applan way
To marshal all the forces now at play.
But yesterday her military feat
Forced Albion stunned to stand at bay:
Will Dunois be so madly indiscreet
To wait for tardy aid, and France once more defeat?

— 2 —

Dunois was dangerous as the thunderblast
But prudent! sick at heart, for Agincourt
By bungling gest was lost. The French aghast
Stood at old Albion's serried front. Report
Spoke goldenly of Henry's pious port;
The King looked, like Hyperion bright the eye
Of heaven, the cynosure of Mars' cohort.
Dunois sought help from earth or hell or sky;
Brave Joan came unto him, an angel from on high.

— 3 —

With him Xaintrailles D'Alencon and La Hire
Were bound as brothers. He was like Jove's stone
Direct and sudden, flashing fierce and clear:
He recognized this meteor from heaven thrown
By a kind Providence, that had now sown
A soul in France, a faith in fatherland,
In King and kinsmen until then unknown.
The French like hunted stags took stubborn stand
Behind the martial Maid, and her inspired command.

— 4 —

They were as Judas, who his Lord did sell:
For that she towered in skill, Joan was opposed
As witch. The captains like bluebeards profess
She is a spirit from hell's horrid coast:
As men of Mars it is their proudest boast
That they can keep both tide and time at bay:
But if the Maid shines with meridian ray
Their stare of twinkling light must in her heaven decay.

—5—

What value is in valor when seas flow,
 And all their legions march like Alps along?
 Of France, Joan is the generalissimo:
 But 'twould invite disaster with a siren song
 To fight the English, who like locusts throng
 In Nilus' land of bog and fen and moor.
 Then they dispatched at morn her squire D'Aulon
 To Blois; but drawn by lode of Orleans' lure
 Meanwhile they reached the town, by daring a detour.

—6—

From Orleans to proud Albion's men she wrote,
 And pressed them in God's name to flee from France:—
 "Hold! hearken to high heaven's King!—Ye dote:
 'Tis criminal and cruel to break lance;
 And on our sacred soil in blood to dance
 Like demons seeking midnight revelry.
 Retire! nor at France' gardens look askance;
 The channel will wall up like the Red Sea;
 Nor will your chariots crush, nor your swift cavalry."

—7—

Insults like hail in June were her reward.
 Prometheus-like Guenne they kept stock-bound:
 Nay, what a brimstone bath Joan they'd accord!
 Their mad effrontery she did then astound,
 And generosity's brow with garlands crowned
 Dispatching Ambleville.—Dunois was heard:
 "Our prisoners all to ashes shall be ground;
 If Joan's ambassadors brave like homing bird
 Be not at once returned, not moments e'en deferred.

—8—

This parley was, alas! the grim prelude
 To tragedy. From such a death, oh! spare
 Us destinies dire of men! The English saw the good
 That grew in Fortune's dell for France and were
 Resolved to nip its blushing bud. They swear
 To burn the Maid, as in Arabian lands
 The locusts not a blade of heather spare.
 If blazing torches fall not from their hands
 They will dispatch her straight to Lethe's forlorn strands.

—9—

Ye Gods! Hath wisdom fled from human breasts?
Fire never yet did heaven's heroes stay;
Nor will it Joan obeying God's behests;
For she at once the tide at flood could lay.
Yet she pure dove of peace will once more say
Unto Gladsdale, "There is left time enough—
Withdraw thy men—let live their breathing clay;
To-morrow will be late, the powers above
Will seal the book of fate, in spite of burning love."

—10—

Ah! peace filled not her cup, 'twas grief and pain;
Yet gifted with a generous loving heart
She would midst men of blood, like angel reign,
And from war's welter have them draw apart.
It grieved her sore the tide of blood to start,
Which dried the beach of palpitating life.
Alas! at length she rode in felon's cart
To death, the victim of the bloody strife
Waged Albion 'twixt and France, with sword and spear and
knife.

—11—

This tragedy drear old Aeschylus would dower
With pathos. Tournelle was the bridge's end,
That from Orleans once stretched across Loire.
The middle span now, angels could not mend:
'Twas o'er this yawning breach that she did send
Requests, as rare and sweet as roses red,
Which would in twain e'en hearts of granite rend.
But they roared: "Cowgirl! Loire's river bed
Shall be thy ashes' urn, cased round with sullen lead."

—12—

They hurl at Joan coarse contumelious oaths
Till blasphemy base in goodly Orleans reeks;
And circumambient ether listening loathes
Their language, that in Hades refuge seeks.
As for herself a rose burns in her cheek
When she flings back their charge: "That is a lie,
Ye shall go hence." To Gladsdale then she speaks:
"You shall in Loire's lairs with comrades die;
You've wounded chivalry's heart, fie on your baseness! fie!

—13—

There's naught left but arbitrament of swords;
For peace a wounded shrieking thing departs
Whence Albion sends her fierce barbaric hordes.
Like Pentecost, on Glasdale fell French darts
Till noonday night became, to sinking hearts,
As when eclipse veils the meridian sun.
Then from the sickening scene Joan slowly parts
With many a tear that war had e'er begun:
It was her strong desire to death they be not done.

—14—

The interim was one wild holiday:
Orleans was pied as is the daisied lea.
The cynosure at Bouchers burns like day;
The citizens now clamber every tree;
Gone there the military Maid to see.
Like crowded ships the people rocked the streets;
Leviathans not so the summer sea.
They greet her, as the earth Hyperion greets;
When he is robed in red, risen from his downy sheets.

—15—

Carnation crimson blazed the soldier's hope
Joan deputy of heaven high to proclaim;
Sent with the freedom of all France, her scope.
Like sun at noon she tells her full-orbed aim;
Why into France' arena she then came:
"The city I'll deliver, aiding God."
They followed her to church, borne by her fame:
She would deliver them from Albion's rod
Like Moses Israelites, who 'neath the pillar trod.

—16—

Like rivers dammed, the 'course of men increased:
Nor will such cataracts brook long delay.
The garrison's Goliaths were released,
Old Albion's hordes in their onrush to stay.
France knew the Fates were bound to speak that day:
"To strongest hearts and hands victory belongs;
And Albion's hopes in shroud of blood shall lay."
Worn Armagnacs trudge 'long in ragged throngs:
The English pray and sing, a psalmody sweet of songs.

JOAN OF ARC.

—17—

How blench the lilies when worms eat the heart!
So failure bites in war. The foe is strong,
And moves as when the landsides listing start.
And bring with them the villages along.
The Maid can hold a tiger with her thong:
God with her, nothing is impossible;
To Him all power in heaven and earth belong.
He rules the legions languishing in hell;
Will give Joan victory's crown, snatched from misfortunes
fell.

—18—

With all the heavy sea of veteran troops
The silence of the Alps reigns, as to Blois.
Dunois the duke to paltering page now stoops
And soon uncases the cause of annoy.
De Chartres with feline kindness would destroy
The expedition; "Fatal this mistake
To strip the towns, and Orleans with men cloy."
Dunois was not caught in this snare. Awake
At dawn he made Orleans, despite of bog or brake.

—19—

'Twas May the fourth, when Joan perceived Dunois
Like Boanerges at old Orleans' gates.
She welcomed him and the cohorts from Blois
With lares and penates and the Fates.
The enemy now like quaking deer breath bates,
Beholding janissaries led by priests:
Distracted with trembling, Albion there awaits;
To see if they perverted serve Mars' feasts,
Parading elephants in arms, and other fearsome beasts.

—20—

Enthusiasm fires e'en recreants:
Now jealous captains Joan obedience bowed
As sunflowers to their god at nightfall dance;
Nor will they by the harquebus be cowed
E'en it is with the power of hell endowed.
The English in their bristling bastiles proud
See all about the heavens a murky pall
That lowers like death cased in his clammy shroud;
Telling their shameful fate, and sad downfall;
When centuries they had spent, in this unchristian brawl.

JOAN OF ARC.

—21—

Now courage clothes the quaking city. News
As noisy as a windmill roaring loud
Knocks at the gate; the Herring's hero brews
A storm that lowers o'er Orleans like a cloud.
Dunois dismounts amid the seething crowd—
Accosts the Maid with reverence and declares:
"Falstolfe's at Orleans' gate." She sweetly bowed
And said: "Dunois! if thou letst unawares
This Albion warrior pass, I'll sow your corse as tares."

—22—

The fates of France dwelled then at Blois. Intrigue
A litter whelped of wolves. De Chartres tried hard
Her designs to devour. Dunois in league!
The demon for the nonce had all plans marred.
Nay, part as well the beetle and his shard
As general Dunois from the Maid's command;
Or his obedience prompt, the least retard.
Gallant magnanimous choice! this was his stand:
If Joan is sent by God, to serve her then is grand.

—23—

Fatigued was Joan with the dramatic ride
To meet Dunois. Her riotous race return
And Falstolfe's march her spirits sorely tried.
That flesh is clay she now begins to learn:
For nature in her least decrees is stern,
Setting for seas high shores, and for work rest;
Nor may impunity e'en her orders spurn.
Joan then with robes of sweet repose was dressed,
And honeyed slumbers came, of all God's gifts the best.

—24—

But suddenly now a sound breaks on her ears:
For voices wildly warn her of a fight;
And screaming she the Bouchers fill with fears,
As firebells startle children in the night.
She cried: "Oh! cruel and unhappy plight
That Frenchmen fall so in the hands of Fate."
They called D'Aulon and armed her quick as light:
She dashed down stairs without all forms or state,
And grasped her pretty flag, making for Orleans gate.

JOAN OF ARC.

—25—

No wonder that proud Albion wins in war:
St. George their general is 'n first command;
And from heaven's heights in his supernal car
Minutest movements, jealous holds in hand.
Not so when strikes St. Loup the Breton band:
Ask Boreas eld who sent them forth to fight.
What folly though heroic was their stand!
Yet all the city gallops to the sight:
For Joan falls like a Jove, in her destructive might.

—26—

A ring of rams and catapults and guns,
Like planets pound the shuddering city walls:
The garrison now pours shot and shell in tons
And with Jove's fire the enemy quite appals.
Dunois at St. Lawrence, a storm of balls
Ra'ns on Talbot's four-square and fiery troops.
Joan at St. Loup knows if that bastille falls,
Falls too the ammunition that it hoops:
A cloudburst were defeat, that o'er old Albion swoops.

—27—

Joan stood on the moat's perilous bank, and urged
Her legions on. An angel garbed in white
With silver shield and breastplate, that emerged
When the sun shone, with silken flag as bright
And 'broidered as a wedding robe, were not a sight
More thrilling than the Maid in high command.
Then Albion's valor fought with main and might:
If demons did not their assaults withstand;
Their aegis like hell's dome, they had spread o'er the land.

—28—

At vesper hour St. Loup had fallen. Night
For once boudoired her Afric robes of black:
Orleans, Aurora Borealis bright,
Was like a sunrise bent on noonday sack.
Bastille St. Loup lay pulsing on its back
And burning like the brands that make the morn.
The arsenals all and granaries there alack!
Are ashes now. Withhold! Withhold your scorn!
Priest robes the English don, and so escape forlorn.

JOAN OF ARC.

—29—

Nay, dumb is language, sullen sick at heart;
A world gone mad with joy greets Joan
On her return. Who knows how fera start
In forest fires, that roar and writhe and moan;
To him how Orleans leaps for joy is known,
When Joan lifts from its neck the siege's yoke,
That to it like a parasite had grown.
Calamity dire rived Albion's antique oak;
As when the splintered pine burns 'neath Jove's blasting
stroke.

—30—

Poets are born. Joan general is by grace—
A genieus, heróine and God's saint in one.
St. Loup a granary was—what a rare race;
For if this arsenal and storehouse are won,
It will like Thor's fierce forge the English stun:
So Joan swoops down upon this frowning fort;
And fells it while the denizens all run.
Talbot is dazed: incredible report!
Who will to gods of war pay longer foolish court.

—31—

The redoubts, ramparts, towers, fosse and walls
Are swarming with Mars' minions for the French:
The action is a storm; the battle calls
War's last man to the turret and the trench;
If by supremest effort they may wrench
The diadem and crown from Englishry.
Full oft has Fortune been a faithless wench;
No longer will she filch France' victory,
Which doubtful e'en yet floats, o'er threatening thirsty
sea.

—32—

No longer Albion's aegis guards St. Loup:
Though barricaded 'bout and buttressed strong,
Death-wounded, victory fluttering from it flew,
When scorpions stung a weltering wizard throng.
Ascension day, sang Joan sweet sacred song:
And gave to Englishry a peaceful spell;
Wherein they, beavers, wrought to right the wrong,
That would their legions from fair France expel.
So now they will defend, if Joan strikes La Tournelle.

JOAN OF ARC.

—33—

At dawn Joan Holy Mass heard and then went
With Mars' own ministers to storm Fort White.
The English burned it, and like arrows bent
Towards St. Augustine's. The French must fight
The fleeing foe: instead 'tis coward flight;
They dash in frenzy and drag with them Joan.
She rallies them; it was a thrilling sight
To see them climb the banks a fortress grown.
And beat down Augustine's, leaving no stone on stone.

—34—

La Tournelle stands there still: the hour is late
The French encamp hardby the strong bastille;
At dawn they'll fell with battering rams the gate
And strike the garrison down until they kneel.
Joan all her myrmidons strikes dumb, who feel
It was a miracle Augustine's fell.
Consulting feverishly the campaign's weal
The captains in their council still did dwell
On the Gibraltar strength, of towered La Tournelle.

—35—

As rocky shore the roaring sea, Joan spurned
Their wisdom. Les Augustine's and St. Loup
Were lost, when she the tides of Fortune turned.
Reading their murky minds their thoughts she knew;
E'en like the ocean stemmed she angry grew,
And in a voice like Jupiter proclaimed:
"To-morrow I will take Tournelle." She flew
Next morning to the camp, and like the arrow aimed
She flung the crushing blow that Albion's honor maimed.

—36—

The captains all compounded were of clay.
They knew that Falstolfe would besiege Orleans,
But Fate's design resolved straight to delay;
Though Albion then entrenching would grow strong.
Was this not treason meditating wrong?
They wished to win themselves in matin's prime,
And laurels lurch from Joan where they belong:
They would commit 'fore heaven a heinous crime
And old Olympus' hill, as heroes higher climb.

—37—

Joan all the budding seeds of time could see:
Her vision scanned the earth both mount and glen;
And ranged the rising tides and ebbing sea.
That her deep wisdom was no human ken
Impressed was, on the wildered sense of men,
Till they abandoned faith in faculties.
"I shall be wounded as in lion's den—
Struck down" cried she, "for it is writ in fixed decrees;
But yet I shall not die, till God himself shall please."

—38—

No sleep till morn, Orleans is drunk with song:
The river was a Venice all that night;
The city one huge sea—a heaving throng;
Which seized the wings of victory in her flight.
Dunois at dawn was plumed like Mars with might:
De Gaucourt skilfully had blocked all the way.
"You are a wicked man," cried she, "we'll fight
Or die; my men shall pass and to the fray."
The tumult pressed them on, 'gainst Burgundy at bay.

—39—

As when a dam bursts, and the waters rush
In cataracts huge down to the great blue sea;
So Orleans poured out tides that kings would crush.
There on the river's bank, the crisis' key,
Till noon they fought, though night it seemed to be;
The balance stood, nor leaned it either way.
Joan is supreme in warlike strategy:
She mounts a ladder—fights where fierce the fray;
But wounded she then falls, and falls the doubtful day

—40—

"The witch has fallen" then yell proud Albion's men;
And like the tide at flood rush now they on:
Like lean and hungry tigress they'll Joan pen,
And hold her for high ransom—empire's pawn.
Well knew the French Joan gone, that all was gone;
And so they fought as if the welkin's ear they'd pierce
About her prostrate body—wounded swan.
As when Jove sighs in April, they in tears
Joan carry to the tent, away from Titans fierce.

JOAN OF ARC.

—41—

"She's risen now from the dead!" they cry, "a witch."
She was for hours death's victim and his prey—
A corse was late borne rearward to the ditch.
France wavered, and Dunois feared for the day.
Joan heard, prostrate as with pain there she lay,
Dunois bugling retreat: she rose and rode
Full gallop to the heart of the fierce fray.
Then consternation seized the English; God
Had raised a sorceress damned, by His fond favoring rod.

—42—

Joan seemed St. Michael to their spell-bound eyes—
In lines and lineaments resembling him;
Or great St. Aignan come straight from the skies,
The patron saint of old Orleans: the whim
Like blinding lightning rived their force. A limb
Of Satan others thought her and a witch.
She was so picturesque, dramatic, trim,
And in God's favor still so strong and rich;
They must paint her as black, as Ate's lake of pitch.

—43—

The end is nigh: they're floundering in the gales;
The French rush like a storm; there is no halt;
They gain the boulevard. Hope wingless fails:
Proud Albion sinks 'neath Jupiter's assault
And caverns in bastille Tournelle. Default
Of boats were death. Brave Joan from the redoubt
Calls Glacidas: she will not be at fault,
And pleads that he do not his last chance flout,—
That he join not the dead, in the impending rout.

—44—

Ah! La Tournelle! thou'rt graven in the heart
Of France and England. Oasis 'twas green
In a Sahara's sand, and to depart
Thence left behind dire dereliction's scene.
Yet in old Albion's palmy islet's sheen
The world will seek one day her stage.
Nay, France will resurrect her reaches lean,
Till she's an Argonaut's and Jason's wage:
The French will blazon too, their name on history's page.

J O A N O F A R C.

—45—

Now twilight falls. Off at St. Lawrence fort
Suffolk and Talbot see French lilies fly
Like doves upon the evening breeze. Report
Goes gossiping like tongues of fire on high:
And Orleans wounds the welkin with its cry;
That wilders worlds afar with rolling peals,
Like Jove's own cannonade in yonder sky.
But yesterday with drugs of death she reels,
And now with victory's wine, o'er highest Alp she wheels.

—46—

The bridge we saw, fell broken span by span.
But lo! restored by magic it stands there;
And thousands pass as whirled by Quixote's fan
To Albion's grave, where weeping sits despair.
The Maid a Honess stands at the lair,
Her whelps defending that sleep in the fort.
La Tournelle now is tearing out his hair;
For Albion long had paid him flattering court:
But Mars impartial stood for Joan with strongest port.

—47—

Now silence the Sphinx rules St. Lawrence tower.
The English lights burn low. The French begin
Retiring to Orleans, drunk with their power;
For bloody booty full oft bursts the bin
Of warriors brave that in Mars' trenches win.
Proud Albion now has ample time to rue
Her enterprize in France as crime and sin.
Her armies all the meads with baggage strew—
Are ready for retreat, ere falls the morning dew.

—48—

Joan wildly welcomed is by the mad shore.
But how reach Bouchers? A great weltering wall—
A wilderness stands there. The people pour
In torrents to Loire. The murky pall
Of night turns red with torches. They now call
On God to bless the Maid and all her men:
The churches are ablaze; the belfries bawl
Intoxication's noisy glee, as when
Peace sudden is declared, to city, mount and glen.

J O A N O F A R C.

—49—

Carrara marble, now seemed fainting Joan—
A worn-out caravel snatched from Mars' main—
A sea of billows bounding, by death blown.
She saw men, myriads, drop to Loire like rain,
Unshrived of sin; and for their loss would fain
Abandon war with all its grief and gore.
The noisy tumult aggravates her pain;
For trumpets, a wild pandemonium pour
Into the vacant air, like a Niagara's roar.

—50—

To the cathedral rushed they, and Te Deum
Like bright orbs sang; eld Abram's faith they had:
The organ pealed the thunders' voice to shame,
And belfry bellowed like the storm. How glad
Who like Medusa centuries long were sad!
Droops now Orleans like willows with fatigue;
For midnight shouted as when seas are mad.
Like bridge-worn captains, Joan repose did seek,
For Glacidas' fate sad, in Loire's cave asleep.

—51—

Subsided like the sea the siege. They're glad
To take the field and break the witch's spell,
Whose mandrake made Old Albion's minions mad.
Now for the open with it trough and swell—
In forts confined, they were as babes in hell:
So fight will Talbot where the Titans fight.
There may be soon another tale to tell;
Released from their imprisonment's sad plight
They will like gods display, Jove's awful riving might.

—52—

Clamors the time for fight; nay, it is meet.
What say the sentinels? War they announce.
Mars' order: "Strike! reeling despair doth greet
All Talbot's camp." The Maid like morning, mounts
Her charger, just refreshed at nature's founts.
They pierce the Renart gates both Scotch and French,
And marshalled are to settle Albion's 'counts.
The English fear the sorceries of the wench,
And call out heaven's own help, from Joan the palm to
wrench.

—53—

Two Masses said, shaft God's most gracious mines.
The English theirs heard camping on the veldt
In circles like the sphere that daily shines,
And humbled 'neath the hand of their God felt.
The French, God praising, on His favors dwellt.
Then Joan asked: "Whither do they turn." Towards Meung
They answered. She: "Like April snows they'll melt;
The Mighty has despair amid them flung."
They ran a frightened throng, as if by scorpion stung.

—54—

Orleans was Eden to fond Albion's dreams;
But all now lost, they leave the luring scene,
And move to Meung like vessels on their beams,
Though rearguard flung behind a shifting screen.
The French in faculties edge like razors keen
Saw in the Maid a mighty marching throng:
And with her were fierce lions gaunt and lean,
Led by a lioness lean, swift, lithe and strong;
Who would fight unto death, against hell's federal wrong.

—55—

Joan Orleans' Maid is now, and history
With bountifulest benizons will bless
The child that stemmed the tides of Albion's sea.
The church a saint of God doth Joan confess.
No marvel if Orleans, freed from distress,
Flings bandoliers of bunting in the air
The city with rainbows of joy to dress;
A hundred years, with conflagrations' glare,
The war consumed poor France, corrupting e'en the air.

J O A N O F A R C.

CANTO VI.

—1—

Success, the child of fortune, charms the world.
These neighboring Titans, ages long had fought:
Yet neither to inferno had been hurled;
Though rare Herculean feats they both had wrought.
True, chariot wheels of Mars ground France to naught
Ere Albion like a shooting star fell down:
And all her valor to a babe's was brought
By Joan an angel, come young Charles to crown,
And resurrect dead France, in spite of fates that frown.

—2—

The words of Bedford blazed history with truth:—
"A maid called Joan, wiles welling filled,
Like spirits of the damned with little ruth,
Her sorcery, in whose art she's princely skilled,
Applies to us till all our wits are stilled.
She wondrously, for it must be confessed,
The enemy France in feats of war had drilled:
That they do the impossible with zest;
And from our frozen hands, like reeds great bastiles wrest."

—3—

Orleans with glory would gild Joan: but no;
She will be gone, her crowning work to do.
Charles saw afar the sunset of his foe,
That brooded night's despair with chilling dew.
His fortunes like the Spring through Pucelle grew.
Set forth at dawn to Chinon's court did Joan—
A comet rare that France on tiptoe drew.
The King met her at Blois, his debt to own;
But France ahead of him, had to the city flown.

—4—

As children perfumed flowers, Charles grasped Joan's hand,
His brow ablaze like roses blown, with joy:
He crowned her noble princess of the land
And did with rare gifts far Domremy cloy—
Immunities and bounties sans alloy.
He blazoned on her flag France' coat of arms;
That none her royal honors might annoy:
And struck all imposts from surrounding farms;
The sunshine of Charles' love, hence all Lorraine's vale
warms.

J O A N O F A R C.

—5—

The enemy then like the barbed arrow flew,
Flung from the twanging bow-string of dismay.
'Twere wisdom, swift as light, then to pursue
And capture them; and their weak legions flay.
But no! brave Joan is held, like saints that pray,
By controversy's council. To the King
She rushed, breaking all bars away
From the assembly hall: and cried: "On wing
Like light, fly we to Rheims, where France for joy will
sing."

—6—

De Chartres with wiles would win in lieu of war;
He would with honeyed words and ways the sea
Becalms, not navigable by north star.
In brief then he: "Your voices do decree
We go to Rheims?" "My voices speak to me"
The maid replied. "Go forth, we'll give thee aid
In legions like the daisies on the lea."
Ah! then her face transfigured shone, as made
Of roses perfumed red, that grow in flora's glade.

—7—

One boulder holds not back the tide: De Chartres
Was conscience-keeper of the King and strong;
But Atlas could not Fate's hand hold. The hearth
Of France was fireless now, for a huge throng
Went waving with Domremy's Maid along.
The chick can see a cloudburst: the King
The multitude beheld and sang its song;
Unwisdom worse than lunacy to cling
To castle indolence, when war was on the wing!

—8—

"Clear first Loire! then safely march to Rheims:"
Cried Joan, when she beheld the milky-way
Of men at her command. The poisonous fangs
Drip honey now; and wolves with lambs do play:
For generals De Laval joined her array,
With Guesclin's blood, who gave back France her soil
In all except the gates of Fort Calais.
The billows of success now with Joan roll
And from meridian height, run to the farthest pole.

J O A N O F A R C.

—9—

The ransomed Duke D'Alencon was not there;
E'en wounded wolves tempt not again their fate;
He wandered in sweet liberty's pure air,
If he might in her woods recuperate.
But courage, Joan could with her wand create:
She hied her to St. Florent where he dwelled—
Nor feared the front or frown of castle gate.
She promised his young wife he'd not be felled—
Nay, would return untouched, from where Mars frantic
yelled.

—10—

The King procrastinates to play: "Make haste"
Cries Joan "I shall not last a year; make use
Of me alive"! Time is oft victory's waste
In war. Pierre and Joan will not to lose
A momen's time. They mount and towards the Meuse
March off like Mars, while she implores the priests
To make processions and God's will peruse.
Now France rolls on, and like a wild sea yeasts
That's whipped with Jove's red thongs, to catch men for
his feasts.

—11—

They march to Orleans, whence all will proceed
To Jargeau. Motley must her men have seemed
To Suffolk: peasants of plebeian breed,
Marines and mountaineers for warriors teemed;
Yet eagles foraging for prey they screamed
And forward went their billows swell on swell
Till Albion all bewildered thought she dreamed.
When nations rise like tides, it must be well
That history like the swan, upon their bosom dwell.

—12—

D'Alencon the assault began: but Joan
Bound as with hoops of steel to his young wife
Said "Get thee hence; see yonder piece"! Alone
Down in the moat she dashed midst war's wild strife:
At once mad rumors of her death ran rife;
The Maid had fallen, and an ocean wild
Ceased not about her bank in tides to drive.
In what a drama acts this wandering child
From Lorraine's hills and vales, by angels far exiled!

J O A N O F A R C.

—13—

She bounded like a roe back in the breach,
That opened like a wound in the stone wall.
"Rush in—Jove's thunderbolts," cried Joan, "And teach
The Albions what is might"! The spheres will fall
When the last trumpet blows the judgment call.
The French the ramparts like young chamois climb;
And o'er the city spread a funeral pall;
As when there comes the crash of space and time
With the last curtain drop, of earth's drama sublime.

—14—

'Twas sad! poor Suffolk! for despite his skill
In argument of battle the last span
With all his troops was sinking. Freakish will!
He would not yield his sword but to brave Joan:
"She's the most valiant woman to earth known"
Cried he aloud. Now fallen is Jargeau!
And back to Orleans La Pucelle has flown
While Suffolk and his prisoners like a bow
March in battalions bowed, in wild triumphal show.

—15—

A synod of the gods could not stay Joan.
Six leagues beyond lay Burgundy. She would
From old Orleans advance; sceptred on throne
None now could have her buttressed will withstood.
This Maid of Meuse come from the old oakwood,
The pulsing heart of France in her hand keeps:
And down as from the mountain comes new blood—
De Richemont jealous, from afar now peeps
Upon France' fleur-de-lis, and 'neath its banner creeps.

—16—

De Richemont after Joan for France did most
To give it resurrection hope and life:
He could of noble blood and station boast—
Had longed to free his France from strife
That cut her heart with interecine knife.
The fiery Constable plunged in the sea
Where fatal monsters worse than waves were rife;
For Charles was green with hate and jealousy,
And ordered him like Saul, from brave Joan's side to flee.

JOAN OF ARC.

—17—

De Richemont would whip sorcery with decree;
And searched her faith as conscience only can:
But she was crystal clear as the salt sea.
"Brave Monsieur Constable" thus she began
"You're welcome." D'Alencon winced and waned wan;
The King's command forbade. But Talbot comes.
And both know well he is no loitering swan.
"Come doughty Constable" said she "your drums
Like Jove's roll, when war storms, and welkin's ear be-
numbs.

—18—

De Richemont won the laurels of that day.
Capitulated Beaugency to Fate:
Nor stood they long 'gainst peerless Joan's array,
Before whose prowess fell each city gate.
Falstolfe scales Talbot, now no longer wait;
They strike the siege and fly to open field,
If fortune there revenge would only sate.
D'Alencon fears the plain; his youths' may yield
When stripped of bulwarks' strength, and battlements that
shield.

—19—

Rearguarding now flies Talbot in retreat;
But Joan remembers Agincourt, Verneuil.
Rouvray, and will not rashly court defeat:
Yet with the soldier's cunning skill and guile
She rushes them retreating mile by mile.
Like aspens, if her raw recruits abate;
She strengthens them like Cleo of the Nile:—
"If Albion in the thunder cloud should wait
We'll have them all" cried she, "our prisoners soon or
late."

—20—

Patay! like Calais that name in the heart
Of Albion is writ. Henry fifth, grand man,
Did to his troops oppugnancy impart
That won against e'en Nemesis' own ban.
Like fawn affrighted now brave Talbot ran,
LaHire with fiery veterans forged ahead;
Only to find the bivouacing clan
To Beauce's brushwood like herds had been led,
And were on Patay's plains, like birds and beasts abed.

JOAN OF ARC.

—21—

The wizardry of Alexander's name
Unhasped not so the Orient city gates
As did Joan, Albion's hold in France. Her fame
Reduced to dust the bulwark built by fates:
The English eagles were in flight. Who waits
For hurricane's strong wings? Falstolfe withdrew
Abandoning Talbot and his forlorn mates.
When Joan fell on their rear they faster flew
And Talbot left in chains, his pride of power to rue.

—22—

Ten thousand English lay upon that plain
Incarnadined with blood; and there hard by,
The French in bivouac sleep beside the slain;
While Falstolfe's men like homing swallows fly.
Next day victory with clamorous clang and cry
Flew back, Joan leading to Orleans. Eight days
Consume all Albion's power; now open lie
Rheims gates. Nay! action in vile sloth decays;
Charles sits there like a Sphinx, for ambush mines the
ways.

—23—

Now Orleans paints fresh lilies for the maid,
And flaunts De Gaucourt's green and crimson flag:
The thoroughfares with damask rich are laid
And buntings banner strong towers till they fag.
Small boys perch in the trees like birds on crag
And all the walls are strung with bays.
Delights it not Joan, as doth streams the stag:
She frets in these fetes o'er her forced delays;
And midst the wildest joys, she languishes four days.

—24—

A velvet robe, red as the roses' bloom,
Adorned her as from Orleans out she rode
Toward Gien, where the King it was known
Would meet her. But poor Charles in sloth's own mode
Longed for a respite from the pricking goad.
Alas! the surging multitude was there;
And lashed to foam, such seas no peace do bode.
Now counsellors and King Charles in conclave lair;
But winds and waters wait for wisdom not, nor prayer.

JOAN OF ARC.

—25—

The sottish Charles would languish in Touraine
Where summer thrusts a heaven o'er the scene:
Eight leagues through bristling English towers; insane!
With Burgundy in ambush in between!
"Let's on to Rheims" cried Joan." By all 'twas seen
No loitering long could be: and then unfurled
The King's flag was: nay, midst a mighty paean
Of song they passed out to dread Albion's world,
Where they like leaves might be into death's trenches
hurled.

—26—

Why faint with fear when glitters France in arms?
D'Albert, Count Clermont, Vendome, De Laval,
Boulonge, Dunois! nay, men rush out in swarms
Though death lay ambushed 'neath each hedge and wall.
Aye! they'll go on if e'en the heavens fall.
Incredible! incredible! the towns
Fling wide their gates! At length a wall
Looks sullen. Auxerre like Gibraltar frowns;
Philip will stand and fight, till doom his death knell
sounds.

—27—

Will Joan strike terms? absurd! Ten thousand crowns
Yet catch the King, and all pass to Champagne.
Anon, they come to Troyes, where frilled with frowns
The garrison, hid in tower and turret, hang
Like fiends o'er corse stung with their fatal fang.
The army camped before the city gates
And passed the time with pantomimic clang.
Joan, orders gave at length. Who would the fates
Invite into the field? Troyes not a moment waits.

—28—

Chalons with gallantry then swung wide her gate
And Joan's joy was like pent-up prisoners' freed.
Some villagers from Domremy patient wait
Far off, to see their little playmate's steed
And Joan amid the princes riding. Need
They shamefaced stand apart? She sent for them
And gave them tokens; 'twas a noble deed.
'Twas sweet to see them kiss her garment's hem
And look on her profile, as prince on Orient gem.

—29—

Next morn Charles and his army marched to Rheims—
 The city of St. Remy, where kings crown:
 The Englishry devoid of teeth and fangs,
 Of death debated: "We shall soon all drown."
 Regnault de Chartres, the prelate of the town,
 Ne'er entered its precincts, though 'twas his seat
 Episcopal. With crozier, mitre, gown,
 He went beyond the wall the King to meet
 And with befitting grace, his noble sovereign greet.

—30—

'Twas noon when halted they at city gate.
 The people garrison clergy joying cried:
 "Noel!" and stood erect as facing Fate
 To cheer the King and brave Joan at his side;
 Nor was Charles jealous, rather filled with pride.
 The peasants rushed as rush men when boats list,
 To see Joan, heaven's own saintly Ma'id and bride:
 They would that day have Phoebus' hot steeds missed,
 Had he not her white flag, with golden glory kissed.

—31—

Afar, for fear, her uncle old Durand
 And Jacques D'Arc too her fondest father stood!
 They gazed through tears upon the triumph grand
 Of Joan, no longer in her cape and hood.
 Jacques must have felt how God to him was good,
 That humble, he could give to frenzied France
 An angel-aided girl in teens to save
 It from dread death's undying sting. In trance
 Was he? She as an Amazon still was brave
 In conquering Albion's King, who would make France a
 slave.

—32—

The King and retinue grand marched to the gate
 Of the old palace: De Chartres welcomed him
 Who flourished now like Araby's towering date.
 As proudest ships that Neptune's ocean swim
 Charles' kingship must at once be rigged and trim;
 And so, like beavers at a dam, they wrought
 Till Phoebus' boiling gold o'erran the brim.
 In church at morn, undone there rested naught
 That science, art or taste, had clamorously sought.

JOAN OF ARC.

—33—

Orleans raved like a spring cataract, when Joan
With Dunois' minions marched through eastern gates.
Now Rheims like Neptune rages, Boreas blown,
Nor till fatigue oppresses them, abates.
They're French and swell with pride of prince, that fates
Had forced e'en 'gainst Charles' will, the holy Maid
To rescue France from mortal shoals and straits.
The senators, rich, proud, dignified and staid,
Down in their heart of hearts, for Joan's success had
prayed.

—34—

'Twas great; 'twas grand! to see in the gray morn
The princes and the peasants pouring in
From Vosges and vale—the lip curled up in scorn,
Or wreathed with smiles—to be there when begin
The coronation forms. They swiftly win
Advantages by clambering up the trees.
The Kings of France anointed there had been:
St. Remy blessed the oils. On bended knees
Her sovereigns sought of God His kingdom's golden keys.

—35—

The scene is laid, and now the princely peers
Of France in gorgeous gilded copes march straight
To the old abbey of St. Remy. Hears
The crowd the cheering, and stays as for Fate
The coming of the oils, while from the gate
The Abbot 'neath a canopy of pure gold
Proceeds, escorting the ampoul all plate.
High clerics the damask pavilion hold
And humeral veil o'er vial, of holiness untold.

—36—

They enter the cathedral: the dense crowd
Besiege the doors in one huge pounding sea.
The organ rolls its thunder long and loud,
Awaking spheres that come like elves to see,
Where wars and plagues and pests were wont to be.
Now all is music, song and joy: no grief
Nor sorrow, but tonitruous minstrelsy.
Brave Joan among the princes is sole chief;
To King and country's cause, she brought God's own relief.

—37—

Cathedral church of Rheims! ah me! how grand!
 Minerva-like yet sprung from Christian mind!
 What art! how cunning! lo! what skill of hand
 The chancel transept nave, in one combined!
 The windows with the rose and lily lined,
 Shot through with sunshine of meridian day;
 Or moon by night, are diamonds Afric mined.
 Here Charles and Joan glittering in Mars' array
 Appear as they were gods, not dressed in human clay.

—38—

They near the altar now! see there's the King!
 Behind him D'Albert with Damascus sword
 Of state! And yonder is sweet Joan awing!
 Perched in piazzas there's a pretty horde
 Of little boys, like cherubs that adored
 Before God's throne, who like canaries sing.
 Some dressed in cardinal of carnations gored,
 Repose; and some in sanctuary censers swing
 Where Araby's incense burns, ascending ring on ring.

—39—

The ceremony now begins. 'Tis grand!
 A thousand lamps blaze bright and perfume fills
 The air; for thuribles burn from the strand
 Of India. As when from far cloudy hills
 Comes rolling thunder; so the music thrills
 Where many monks sing to the mighty peals
 Of the great organ. Ritual rightly wills
 The King be honored when he's crowned. Then reels
 All Rheims with Te Deum, as ships whirl on their keels.

—40—

Joan's mind is far away! Her throbbing heart
 Lives here; but she loves Isobel. Her home
 Beside the Meuse imagination's art
 Paints clear. She sees the church with arching dome.
 How sweet the days when there she used to roam!
 'Twas long! eight hours! yet, she stood flag in hand,
 And perchance wondered what great history's tome
 Would say, when all of them were on the strand
 Where not one whit of praise, earth's honors can command.

—41—

Oft August thunders fall with planets' crash
 As if yon white-capped Alps were tumbling down
 And heaven to harvest plied the lightning's lash;
 So seemed the cannon then to shock the town.
 They tell, like Jove, that Charles will hence be known
 As King of France, and sovereign in God's stead,
 Anointed by the priest to wear His crown.
 'Tis Albion's day of wrath: what bitter bread
 She'll eat till County Guise, cuts off her humbled head.

—42—

Joan's work was done if this she only knew;
 Though Albion yet held Seine with Burgundy.
 From ashen embers she, like Phoenix, drew
 Her country and its kingship. Her plea
 Was to take peaceful leave of war's wild sea
 And spend in vale of Meuse her sunset hours!
 Lo! as she stands beneath Rheims' panoply
 She sees defeat arrest and frowning towers;
 And all the sombre clouds, that o'er her future lowers.

—43—

When all was o'er she to the King advanced,
 And threw herself down weeping at his feet;
 As one with joy and ecstasy entranced.
 "The Dauphin King of France" cried she, "I greet:—
 The siege is raised and thou art crowned: 'twas meet,
 At Rheims; hence thou art emperor and King.
 Now let us with good Philip at once treat;
 And all the English out of Belle France fling
 With their accoutrements, which brazenly they bring."

—44—

The King was by the goodly girl confused;
 His heart like riven oak in splinters flew:
 This pageantry of trance his eyes abused.
 Collected soon he asked—did even sue—
 If half his kingdom she claimed as her due.
 Unselfish ever Joan asked then that he
 Except from impost, Domremy and Breux.
 The ocean's argosies were not a fee
 For saving foundering France, as from a raging sea.

J O A N O F A R C.

—45—

Youthful the King! How it is passing strange
That men masked oft and immature remain
Till o'er the snow-capped hills of time they range!
To act now like a king was all to gain,
But Charles for years like lunatic did reign
Capering like matador in the bull ring
Ever voluptuous, vicious, vile and vain.
Yet men like gods at length his praises sing;
He oped an epoch's door, and gave France flashing wing.

—46—

Now Charles by sloth's un wisdom moved, would bring
Diplomacy to catch stern Burgundy.
He whirled about in an enchanted ring
Far out on pleasures' gaudy giddy sea;
While Joan urged Albion far from France to flee:
"Let's on to Paris—lift the alien's ban,"
Cried she, "strike France's fetters—make her free;
That freedom, life and liberty's elan,
Intoxicate her sons—exalt her fiery clan."

—47—

Like old Rome, Paris was a polyglot—
A Babylon of wealth and creed and race;
Where even Scythians an asylum sought.
Yet still the patriot did its forum grace:
When Charles was swiftly cast out in disgrace,
And Henry sixth crowned emperor of France;
A surly monster stalked the market place.
The French at once turned gods, and would not dance
Attendance on their foes, that sneered in every glance.

—48—

The University flung away its key,
And lost its own true life. How it were strange
If Frenchmen should of France make a dead sea!
The heart of France is true—e'en beasts in grange
And all the fish and fowl at large that range:
Yet doctors with Joan will not e'en commune,
Or with the Armagnacs have interchange.
They know well that they sow the seeds of ruin
Deep in the soil of France, and rankle glorious June.

JOAN OF ARC.

—49—

The Romans loved their lusty holiday;
Not so King Charles on wanton pleasures bent:
Impetuous Joan had crowned him yesterday;
And now would have him camp beneath heaven's tent
And court the dangers of Mars' field. They went
Through vales of flowers that waved like sails at sea
Towards Beauce's brushwood, and made mighty rent
In England's empire, France's heart to free;
Yet spilled no blood that day, in trench or road or lea.

—50—

Ah! this is France! Two hundred years their love
Had lived, though chilled to death by foreign frost.
They looked upon Joan as come from above,
And hastened to embrace their King whate'er the cost.
The cities welcomed Charles as his troops crossed
The fatherland. Now they are at Beauvais
Whose towers that eve with glory were embossed.
They're met by cheering crowds far on the way,
Who lead them to her gates, where carpets pave the way.

—51—

"Long live the king" now Beauvais shouted loud—
The King of France; all hail to Charles our King."
The Te Deum they sang, aye, France waxed proud,
And made the heavens with thundering plaudits ring.
The traitor Bishop fearing death, took wing,
For he was true to Burgundy at Troyes;
And still held poison in his mortal sting,
Which he would like a scorpion soon employ
The life of blessed Joan, in anguish to destroy.

JOAN OF ARC.

CANTO VII.

—1—

Did Charles seem mad? 'twas nature's fault, not his;
She plays pranks often not for men to see.
At times his wisdom did the heavens kiss;
Then he would consort with wild circusry
And travel seeking sweets like honeybee.
The keys of Compeigne, that, Joan withstood,
Are his: yet he will not fight Burgundy.
Peace he will parle, that sloth indulge her mood;
Inaction is his bride, and errors are his brood.

—2—

D'Alencon flies to Normandy and takes
Chateau Gilliard—an eagle at the heart
Of Albion's power. Then Bedford straight forsakes
His Paris; dices with death; his life stakes.
Fate gave to Charles this opportunity:
But he plunged deep in fancy's bogs and brakes;
And balls danced with fairies nightly free;
For he was bent on play, and loved Terpsichore.

—3—

But fifteen days and Burgundy will give
Him Paris. Fie on faith in princes! Joan
Read Phillip's thoughts as water falls o'er cliff:
The mind of Charles like prayer by her was known;—
His treason to a very monster grown
Laired in the treaty. Joan her troops will keep
To fall on them like Jupiter's red stone.
Aye, when she strikes no living thing shall sleep:
Or if it sleep indeed, it will be death's dread sleep.

—4—

Surrenders Paris! Mars on Cupid leans!
Will Charles attack when Bedford is away?
No; Fate drove him to Arcady's far scenes,
To pearl for Joan a pretty primrose way;
While Duke Savoy led Burgundy astray,
Detouring him with baubles, for the King.
Joan, like chained dragons clamoring for the day,
Charles knows a meteor's bolt at once would fling
'Gainst Paris, and so France, to his obedience bring.

J O A N O F A R C.

—5—

A treasonable thing does Charles: then how
Can he his honor keep, one foot in hell?
In sackcloth France, with ashes smeared, must bow.
Aye, Paris will be 'sieged Charles knows too well;
No nun is Joan in peaceful convent cell:
So Burgundy and Charles conspire. The days
For Joan drag as do years in dungeon fell;
Impatient now she will brook no delays
And bombard Paris' gate, as 'raged Poseidon brays.

—6—

Condemn Charles, outcast and traitor shamed!
History will blush to open at this page;
Still she must not for candor's truth be blamed.
She storms like Neptune in his wildest rage:
To mark down princes' treachery as 'twere sage ;
Which claims the garlands won by Joan in war.
She will award Charles sad Medusa's wage:—
His son with Burgundy did live afar
A father's eventide, with madness stark to mar.

—7—

What perfidy! and yet they were not shot.
Perspective must be pleased to pardon me.
Were they not burned alive? why not? why not?
'Twas germane to that age of infamy.
Why should Joan suffer fire and they go free?—
Now Paris will taste war; they will let Joan
Attack. Burgundians, like hoarse storms at sea,
Will surge about her: Charles will then disown
Joan's wild and wanton siege, and plead 'twas all unknown.

—8—

'Twas infamous! 'twas perjured! was that day!
Grim griffin Charles with Joan to Paris flew
But not to war; 'twas mere parade and play
Which hell alone hypocrisy then knew.—
A Guise like Guesclin will one day pursue
The English rout, and finish Joan's dread work.
Yet traitors, treacherous plans now basely brew:
And no scarfed Mussulman or turbaned Turk
Could more malign mask wear, or rapier and dirk.

—9—

Now Picardy joined Joan: the major part
 Of France languished and longed for nothing more
 Than to be one, a fatherland in heart,
 And cease to spill their brothers' weltering gore.
 The Dauphin once King, would sweet peace restore;
 And all might clamber like vines 'bout the crown
 Whose sacred symbol they, like grace, adore.
 To Burgundy, Charles' bond now cable grown—
 He dared not as he ought, go forthwith and disown.

—10—

Joan languished then to be from fetters loosed:—
 "Give me my men from old Orleans and Rheims
 That loiter round in thousands like stags noosed;
 Inaction draws their fretful fighting fangs
 And they slink slothful from their glittering ranks.
 One word! say Paris! and like antlered beasts,
 They'll rush to arms despite of fardeaus' pangs—
 Go forth to war as to their wedding feasts.
 To end the century's broil, that like a sea still yeasts."

—11—

She called D'Alencon commandant-in-chief—
 And said: "Now belt with steel, for our emprise,
 Your phalanxes! Your captains too in brief
 Have dressed in valor's trappings to the eyes;
 For Paris and its faubergs is the prize."
 Hence men that fought at Patay and Orleans,
 Like locusts thronged, to hazard life's rare dice.
 Behold once more ran high the glorious scenes,
 That early plunged the Maid, in soaring sea of means.

—12—

Like Mars invincible, dared not the King
 Joan's purpose to resist; 'twas from the sky.
 Like birds migrating all were soon awing.
 From Compeigne they marched as falcons fly
 To St. Denis, their banners floating high.
 Nay, Paris not like Rheims was, nor Orleans;
 Her voices like lost souls were heard to sigh:
 For leagued against Joan were a thousand spleens
 To leap at her downfall, and sing their joyous paeans.

—13—

St. Denis raved as mad with ecstasies—
Delighted that the Maid stood at her gate.
But perfidy! Who could the monster please?
The King and council whipped by surly Fate—
The frenzy of the French—rode up though late,
And so kept faith with the conspiracy.
Like synods making laws Joan's army sate
With D'Alencon propounding peaceful plea,
That they might enter straight, without blood St. Denis.

—14—

They, proclamations on the place still shower,
That promise piping peace to weltering France,
And valleys fat with lowing herds and power
If St. Denis Joan's arms an entrance grants.
But Paris, Babylon in pleasure's trance
Immersed, defiance hurls at peaceful pleas,
While hatred worse is written in its glance.
Naught but life's sacrifice Mars will appease,
Hence Joan begins to read God's own adverse decree.

—15—

Till now LaHire, turned saint, no longer swore:
And oft the camp pealed forth its matin song.
Alas the change! fierce oaths like thunders roar:
The heavens high still do them most fearful wrong;
Though Fate and fortune to the gods belong.
Their wassails wake the drowsy ear of night
As when the winds of Eolus blow strong.
Joan saw with horror her new painful plight,
That like a mildew fell, and did her courage blight.

—16—

St. Margaret's sword in splinters e'en now broke—
The symbol that her miracles had wrought;
When on her fell victories like 'Lias' cloak—
Reward of bringing enemies all to naught
Nay, with its mystic power she bravely fought;
Until she crowned at Rheims the Dauphin King;
Confounding Burgundy as he were caught.
Ah, now how pitiful is the poor lone thing
A torreador sans lance, in wild arena's ring!

J O A N O F A R C.

—17—

Proud Albion now warns all of massacre.
The armagnacs of gore keep memory fresh
Whose smoking ashes she doth wisely stir,
Exposing embers charred of human flesh
Remains of martyrs slain as in a mesh.
Yea, vengeance red will now be wreaked by Charles
Who then was saved stolen from his infant creche
Borne swiftly as bird flies o'er burning marl.
Then fight like lions we must, not impotently snarl.

—18—

Aye, Paris will resist unto the death
And Joan from St. Denis drive sprawling thence.
Twelve days with beating hearts and bated breath
They waited. Like a cancer now suspense
Was eating their enthusiasm tense.
As ocean dykes, Joan breaks through wise restraint,
And charges, but at awfullest expense.
The King forbids and mutters a complaint;
All Paris screams delight, at humbling so the saint.

—19—

When the attack began, it was a feast
Wherein praise, men give to the Virgin Queen.
Still Joan rose up like Phoebus in the east
Great Burgundy and Albion brave between;
She was of all the warriors tried the dean,
And pierced the weakest joint in war's worn mail.
Religious hypocrite, Joan ne'er had been:
And so she charged the gate like ocean's gale;
Though 'twere a sacrilege, she did Paris assail.

—20—

At eight o'clock they stormed St. Honore;
And sounded at high noon the main assault.
Joan dashed into the moat to win the day,
Her captains wildly in the fosse did vault:
If they won not 'twas gods that were at fault.
For faggots soon she frantically calls
To fill the ditch: proud Albion orders "halt"! "Surrender to our King": but from the walls
Joan soon was seen to fall, as high Hyperion falls.

—21—

Alas! poor fortune is a jade 'gainst odds!
 She haggard, hides beneath the longest guns—
 Fight they for rights—defend they fellest frauds:
 If Jove's in sight, with his bolts she still runs.
 Alas! the thunder of the cannon stuns
 Brave Joan. When wounded she shrieks: "Fight! fight on!
 Though mounted culverins vomit stone in tons."
 But failed the day with all its blushing dawn;
 And she retired heart sore, her face and form worn wan.

—22—

That night at ten, D'Alencon and Gaucourt,
 For aught that Joan's sweet pleading could, retire
 Like travellers spent wand'ring o'er fen and moor.
 Her army buried, like the heavens its fire;
 For janissaries trained by Turk and Tartan tire
 When deserts' drought consumes the life within.
 But yesternorn Joan's troops would dare Jove's ire:
 They now, like Alpine snow in June, begin
 To soften and sink down, and have no chance 'o win.

—23—

There was a momentary gleam of hope
 When Montmorency, like the dawn, dashed down
 From Paris, with high heaven's aid, to cope
 With Burgundy. Like Pelion proud they frown,
 These valiant French, when obdurate Fate is known:
 They must retire by order of the King:
 As when Jove cleaves Poseidon they so groan.
 How sharper is rebuff than serpent's sting!
 Joan flutters now and sinks, as eaglets weak of wing.

—24—

Her "pretty Duke D'Alencon" tried and true,
 With chivalry's caress would Joan console.
 Alas! in her prophetic heart she knew
 Charles was but playing premier role;
 For he had sold the kingdom of his soul.
 D'Alencon 'cross the Seine a bridge had thrown:
 Charles felled it—standing 'twixt him and his goal.
 In Jove's vault there was le't no single stone,
 Or Charles to death were bruised, and bruised too were his
 throne.

JOAN OF ARC.

—25—

Ah destiny! why sent you not Joan home;
When she like kings at St. Denis had placed
Her arms upon a pillar 'neath its dome;
That with a thousand heroes' helms was graced,
Now mouldering though well gilded once and chased?
What more could Joan do now for fallen France:
Her troops all fled, her aegis torn disgraced—
Betrayed: while Charles with Nemesis would prance
And hunt the livelong day, and nightly sing and dance?

—26—

The sky is murky now, 'tis leaden gray;
Its tears are brewing 'bove earth's breathing plain;
And blear the eyes of Sol the king of day.
Ah! but it is a world of grief and pain!
Remaining at Charles' castles were a stain:
She parleys yet a while with D'Alencon;
The firmament still hangs low. Nought's to gain;
Then she will go and die her friends among:
'Twere better far than drown, or be by Albion hung.

—27—

Now all is changed: defeat the hero stales.
Invincible was once, the heaven-sent Joan;
Now, at the Maid the driving rain e'en rails.
How poorer than the wail to be alone,
With purple and fine linen on her thrown,
Midst gorgeous gala fetes and tournaments:
For she is trampled by the gods and prone!
Ah! could she to the battle fields and tents,
Or burn in market-place, these peaceful ornaments.

—28—

A tigress in a golden cage! what roar!
Joan orphaned of her prowess driven about,
As Neptune drives his steeds from shore to shore:
She climbs no more the enemy's tall redoubt;
Now Charles and Joan the people fairly flout.
As they go to Gien who opes the gate?
Their star is set and night shrouds all about;
The King sees sadly now the hand of Fate
Writing Joan's death decree, but it is late, too late.

—29—

D'Alencon now would strike at Normandy
 But slinking Charles sent the poor petard home.
 Joan swims a pretty mermaid in a sea
 That floats great argosies from India come;
 While aimless all around her, dolphins roam,
 And kill with primrose pleasures precious time.
 On sunny Cydnus Charles, 'neath gorgeous dome
 Of yonder gilded bark, composes rhyme
 Though Muses in conclave condemn 'gainst art his crime.

—30—

Inaction and aggression counterparts!
 Proud Albion's legions with death line Loire;
 From castle indolence to Brouges Joan starts,
 And Amazon begins again the war.
 Le Moustier for the nonce her force did mar,
 But skill and valor won by night the town,
 And Bedford found a planet struck his car.
 E'en Burgundy failed beaten foot to crown
 By genius sweet as rose, and soft as the swan's down.

—31—

La Clarite resourceful as a well,
 Pierre Grasset commanded: while poor Joan
 For siege and sortie was equipped not well.
 If Orleans, a sodth Phoebus day, should loan
 Her force, victory would hurry from her throne.
 At sinking sun the war-worn French retire
 When shadows long the disc of earth lay prone.
 Thing strange, Grasset next morn gave Charles, his Sire,
 The keys of Clarite, though not a gun did fire.

—32—

Joan then made straight for Sully-sur Loire:
 La Tremouille dwelled there and there did plan
 Impediments to clog the wheels of war.
 The steeds of time for Joan here slowly ran:
 So, strenuous as the storm, she then began
 The catapults and culverins to raise;
 And aid Melun 'neath Burgundy's vile ban.
 No more did she annoy Charles' gilded gaze;
 The Gorgon had escaped, and too her blasting blaze.

JOAN OF ARC.

—33—

Now history whimpers and her eyes do flow:
Joan's day is done and raven night creeps close.
Her voices at Melun—sad dials, show
She'll be a prisoner caged with cankering woes
Before St. John's feast. Ah! the awful throes
Of martyrdom's fire she will not refuse
When it burns round her, red as the blown rose.
Now were I gifted with the poet's Muse
I'd sing a song of Joan, that hearts of stone would bruise.

—34—

Like Sisyphus she tired not of her fate
But hied to Langy, D'Arras to arrest—
A brigand brutal without love or hate.
The golden fleece of Jason, Grecian quest
He'd steal were it the treasure of a guest;
The galleon he would lift from off the tide,
Belonged it to the angels or the blest:
But halted by death, seeking a fit bride;
Burgundians blamed brave Joan, and 'gainst her angels
cried.

—35—

For this the English and Burgundians
Will rive with thunderbolts the ruthless Maid;
For D'Arras killed by Joan or Jove, still tends
To frighten armies disciplined and staid.
The spirit of wild panic must be laid
Else Babylon's weird script will etch the wall.
They will crush him who is of Joan afraid;
Come kindling morn and cock's shrill clarion call,
Fear's minions must parade, or in their fresh grave fall.

—36—

A genius is Joan in the arts of war,
Yet shrewd as statesmen in diplomacy;
She'll seep through sands 'neath Burgundy's high bar.
This sightless mole that mound did clearly see;
That fatal 'twere with Burgundy to agree:
'Twould cost the country's blood for twenty years;
Ere it would rise from this gehenna free.
This folly fills Joan's eye with burning tears,
And will all France with death, and corses' bursting biers.

JOAN OF ARC.

—37—

Charles pledges Compienge: but halt; his host
Yields not to slavery's yoke. In lieu Maxence
Must be the prize. When Burgundy that lost
Erupting Aetna never was so tense
With rage: but Joan was glad beyond all sense.
"I'll see my friends in Compienne" said she.
She went at once and found nor fire nor fence:
Their straits were strangling and their grief a sea;
So she resolved to make a masterful sortie.

—38—

Now dangers swarmed: her army improvised
Was not with war's fanaticism crazed.
Her bravery yet, Bellona's dash, was prized
And with her mystic might they still were dazed.
De Flavy soon an ardent army raised
And with brave Joan arranged a swift sortie;
For e'en despair was by her angels braced
To battle 'gainst firm destiny's decree
Before whom heroes e'en, in panic wild would flee.

—39—

Dame fortune fickle is; e'en nature was
Against Joan, for the marsh was broad and deep,
One highway belting it with hedge of haws.
The banks of Oise are rugged shelved and steep;
Its bridges has boulevards, that soldiers keep
Like captains in the tower in the storm's hell;
Once closed men must into the river leap.
'Gainst Joan the league is consummate and fell
Her sortie sounds the end, sounds also her death-knell.

—40—

The scene is picturesque; the prattling town
Sleeps on the Oise that in its bosom boasts
The waters of Aronde, and yonder frown
The hills of Picardy that rise like ghosts
Above the marsh, where hide the wicked hosts
Of Burgundy and Albion eld. Between
The river and the cliffs, the fen's far coasts,
The great moor waving lay in green and green;
Where frequent strides the stork, with high and haughty
mien.

—41—

Margny a pretty village gems the end
 Of the road ribboning the marsh. Clairvoix
 A hamlet to the east was not Joan's friend.
 In the arch of Joan's plan there was one flaw;
 Vilette a half league west at length she saw—
 Too late: it was a monster clothed in down;
 For Joan it had the plunging ocean's maw;
 That would like Scylla suck her army down
 As evening shadows fall and on day's dial frown.

—42—

Joan's courage never entertained a doubt;
 So she the highway crossed o'er to Margny:
 Then on to Clairvoix passing the redoubt
 To draw the Duke and force him forth to flee.
 To hold the English Flavy did agree,
 So to the boulevard returning Joan
 Would have an entrance. But God keeps the key
 Of Providence: to Him was only known
 The angel of defeat had to her banner flown.

—43—

The sun is sinking in the sea: the west
 Lay there in ambush; while a sable hearse
 Concealed stands just behind the mountain crest
 That will day's orb in darkness' depths immerse.
 The hour is five: the soldiers mount: they purse
 Their cheeks: they set their teeth: they ride away
 Their art and skill Joan with her faith: doth nurse
 And like cement they're hardening for the fray.
 Now they'll all die the death, or win Joan's doubtful day.

—44—

Behold yon line of horses four abreast!
 The damsel riding first—that's Joan. Pierre
 Her brother is at left, D'Alencon dressed
 As squire, her standard holding in the air,
 Brings up the right. How will they fare?
 Time faints: the sun seems wounded in the west:
 'Tis bent and burdened with a fardeau's care
 And is with agony's awful pangs oppressed.
 Ne'er was old Sol so seen, with aching heart distressed

J O A N O F A R C.

—45—

The cavalcade rode on and Joan rejoiced;
The day was one high hippodrome of light.
Off there the sleepless campers still kept tryst.
Beyond was Burgundy—the traitor—blight
Of France in hiding. Will Joan ere the night
Win a great victory? Then it were worth while.
Rejoice ye men with prospects grand in sight!
Nay, it were well had she some saving guile
Lest fortune, fickle hag, wear a coquettish smile.

—46—

In Compiegne they all rejoiced that day:
Festooned the river banks were with the flower
Of chivalry; the walls with men did sway;
They populated every tree and tower;
The windows were all wedged for many an hour
Before Joan rode out through the great city gate.
But there beyond the skies ill luck doth lower
That will pour down upon her purple state.
She recks not so she fights for France whate'er her fate.

—47—

They fight: Margny cannot resist the shock—
Does not. Nay all's not well; the witch of war
Though with tried Albion's garrison doth lock
In desperate encounter: for afar
The Duke comes galloping in comet's car
To aid his men. Three times the doubtful day
Sways back and forth, none trusting to his star.
At length the French fall back hewing the way
For poor Joan's last retreat, just when day's sky grew
gray.

—48—

The English rush now to rejoin their friends.
De Flavy stoutly holds the boulevard;
And e'en to barricade the way, he lends
His powerful arm. But Albion too keeps guard
Upon the highway from Venette. All's marred.
The English hew a gap through Flavy's men;
Who on that fated day was so ill-starred,
Till in the battle, e'en a prophet-bard,
Could not discern the friend, though Phoebus his eye
guard.

JOAN OF ARC.

—49—

De Flavy fails. Is't perfidy or Fate?
History dares not decide. He doesn't play
His part. In panic or design the gate
He hasps, and forces Joan beyond to stay.
He was a soldier yet perhaps at bay
Lost sight of his great general, gentle Joan.
How little she suspects her setting day,
While fighting gallantly in death's dread zone,
Till by the ranks of Fate, her ranks are overthrown!

—50—

Alas! night's curtain closes her career!
A band of friends with D'Aulon and Pierre
Fight for her safety, knowing no fear;
For they colossal elephants would dare.
Her sun is setting that was once so fair.
The men of Burgundy now wildly cry:—
"Joan's taken." She falls fainting unaware:
Or is she deafened by the horrid blare
When dragged from plunging steed, that beats the bound-
less air.

JOAN OF ARC.

CANTO VIII.

—1—

Three days the stubborn bol' held fast; the trap
Refused to budge. Did Cauchon sleep? His zeal
They knew 'ell-born; he loomed the felon's cap
For Joan's head; he would smile to see her reel
Into eternity: 'twere for the weal
Of Albion's cause—Wait! Trinity is rare;
She will receive; he can her garments steal:
'Tis heresy the male attire to wear.
Lo! She will be undone; in his infernal snare.

—2—

'Gainst treachery base e'en slaves at length revolt,
Injustice whipped. No god could filch her right
To live as woman—armed with thunderbolt;
They cloistered her with soldiers still in sight.
How lower than brutish beasts! Pathetic plight!
Lust'ring death, her virtue she will shield
And sate their malice born of fear and spite:
Their dark design but clumsily concealed
She wittingly fulfilled, and death's fell warrant sealed.

—3—

Relapse! relapse! This music made them mad;
Old Warwick wild, conveyed Cauchon the news.
What lamb when wolves approach becomes not sad?
She knows death's stealthy tread and her eye brews
Some unborn bitter tears; still calm she views
The old man and "his messengers of God";
And reads—a prophetess, his crafty clues.
"My God," she cried, "would whip me with His rod
If to deny He sent me, I were such a clod."

—4—

"But you recanted," cried he, "Thursday last."
She: "What I did was through the fear of fire
Which in my heart an awful terror cast.
Oh God! my voices love and truth inspire;
On living coals rather would I expire;
Than thankless prove for my dear Angels' grace."
Now Cauchon joyed: this was a deeper mire:
He confidently could the English face
And promise Joan would die, in hell's devouring blaze.

J O A N O F A R C.

—5—

The court assembled—the sword of human laws;
"She had relapsed" the witnesses all swore.
The judge delivered her into the jaws
Of wolves that raved for blood! With splendid lore
The assessors had cut to the case's core:—
Declared her witch and excommunicate;
Deserving death in fires that rage and roar
In the old market place; so might the state
Cast out the cancerous growth, with not a moment's wait.

—6—

The morning dawned. Fra Ladvenu appeared
In Joan's dark dungeon cell; came he she knew
The messenger of death; and so she geared
Her heart and nerves that like the lightnings flew.
How her imaginings by night came true!
He told her of her fearful death by fire—
That she had still to live short hours and few;
And to her conscience' court she should retire :
That martyr grand she die, on persecution's pyre.

—7—

Accustomed to the scenes and sounds of war
'Twas passing strange that death should terrorize
The fearless Maid; or that she dread the bar
Of Cauchon's court. 'Twas fancy filled her eyes
With fire and smoke that from volcanoes rise.
She saw men vesting her with felon's gown
Which drew from her wild agonizing cries.
Her hero's fortitude had broken down;
For it was ten times worse to die by fire than drown.

—8—

In this dark hour did she doubt or deny
Her Angels' aid or say they did not well?
If crazed with hunter's horn—with hue and cry
The harrassed hare leaps clear from cliff to dell
We wonder not. Her persecutions' hell
Was not surpassed in Satan's dark conclave;
For in imagination e'en to dwell
On it, the mind would totter. Then to rave
At tortures of the stake, belittles not the brave.

JOAN OF ARC.

—9—

Howso confused she was in that dark hour,
This daughter of Lorraine stood firm as brass
And strong in her resolve as Pisan tower
Her Master's death to taste; 'twere crass,
As naught to let such chance of penance pass.
The peace of God came then to her poor soul,
An ignominious death for justice, was
To imitate the Lord. This too her goal;
That history plead her cause, like Jove from pole to pole.

—10—

To Joan as heretic for months, her kin
Denied the sacraments; but now Massieu
And Martin held that to confess her sin
Was her clear right. Without wait or ado
Cauchon permitted it, though well he knew
She unrepentant, it were sacrilege.
Her recantation then she straight withdrew;
But Judge Cauchon cared not for oath or pledge
And sailed like argosy o'er such low lying sedge.

—11—

The fears of English wrath and the stern bar
Of justice, 'twas that caused the sore neglect
Of dignity, and did the ritual mar.
The priest assigned incontinently wreckt
The forms prescribed by Holy Church, correct
In each detail:—procession, lights and bell.
On her this blundering breach did much reflect;
But Martin's protest set the chimes to swell;
And hymns of prayer and praise, from myriad throats to
well.

—12—

The vaulted aisles are vocal with sweet song,
Which wave on wave beats 'gainst the panting roof
Like men that drown; outside, rolls on the throng
Like seas toward her death cell, now escape-proof.
The fretful cavalcade stamp at the hoof
Impatient of delay. Joan will receive
Her loving Lord; all with acclaim approve:
They form procession, for they all believe;
And drop upon their knees, on carpet nature's weave.

—13—

'Twas May; the morn was beautiful; the sun
Poured molten gold in torrents on the town;
Night's candles were burnt out ere he had won
The blushing east. Then lit were tapers, down
The narrow streets, where jutting gables frown
Like wrinkled rocks o'er ships that ride at road.
They lead on to the ivied tower, age-brown,
And carry singing psalms, their mystic load
To Joan's sweet heavenly soul, on earth its blest abode.

—14—

Viaticum! that word of wonders! How
The Christian welcomes Christ to lead him on
From life through death's dun dreary vale! E'en now
He sees the holy priest his vestments don
To bring the grace on Calvary's crater won
To all the sons of men of righteous will.
Thus, Joan still waited like a wistful nun
The coming of the Lord, her soul to fill
With joys of calm content, and all her being thrill.

—15—

Who shall these joys of her starved soul indict?
These moons she had received not, her dear Lord
As hellish witch: or did they think it right
This blessing to her soul not to accord;
Since she had put her thousands to the sword?
Ah yes! But Joan had harried none in war;
Nor any living thing to death had gored:
Hence longer they could not erect a bar,
'Gainst Christ her King and Lord, or His home-coming
mar.

—16

In brief thanksgiving she was wholly rapt;
Her gratitude like fire consumed her heart:
To swoon for love of angels she was apt;
But now with God alone she went apart—
If His embrace sweet solaces would start.
Approaching death wakes her from this repose;
She hears the rumbling of the felon's cart;
Then rising from her ecstasies she goes
To Maurice and Pierre, to aid her in her throes.

J O A N O F A R C.

—17—

"Oh father! where think'st I shall be to-night;"
Was her soft plaint. She lost her constant calm,
And broken-hearted was her piteous plight;
Nor could she now fear's awful ocean dam.
"My child"—the monk poured out a brother's balm—
"Hast thou not hope in God?" She answered "Yes,
In heaven I hope to dwell with God's pure Lamb."
Then piteously she prayed that he would bless
Her in her dying hour, and kindness' kiss caress.

—18—

There's tramp of soldiers o'er the stony street;
She hearkens till they form in the old square:
But fear distraught, she's deaf when they all greet
The courtiers, counts and clerics that are there,
All robed in gorgeous ermine gowns. Their care
Was justice to Joan to see sternly done
And Holy Church from heresy to spare;
E'en if they burned an infant while the sun
Stood still with grief, and on its course refused to run.

—19—

Cauchon e'er going forth, the priests had sent
Into her dungeon;—motives from hell hot:
Despair and desperation might have bent
Her haughty spirits. She sat there on her cot
Like porphyry pure, and now the thing they sought
Looked up defiant; Aye! Joan squarely faced
The Bishop: "I appeal from you to God;
I die because of you." And when disgraced
By a mere lisping child, forth from her cell they paced.

—20—

'Twas near the hour of eight. The weary days
In cells were now all o'er; she left the tower.
The morn met Joan with sympathetic gaze
And looked into her eyes sweet as a flower.
The end had come; she thanked God for that hour
And death by fire if such was hers by Fate.
Ah me! She came forth strong as feudal tower
To die for France, through superstition's hate
If it must needs be so, her enemies to sate.

—21—

No longer as a soldier was she dressed,
But spotlessly in lawn; her purity
They all admired with vestal vows caressed;
And dedicate to God in simple fee.
Massieu, Martin, Pierre—her company
Received her in the vulgar felon's car;
That set out for the square amid a sea
Of surging soldiers; while from near and far
Crowds came to see her cross death's cruel burning bar.

—22—

Fair, lovely, girlish, pure and sacrosanct,
She looked as she came forth from the bastille:
With smiles most sad her keeper then she thanked,
As she passed o'er the dungeon's sombre sill.
The morning sun high on the eastern hill
Bent low, if it might damn and disallow
Men's horrible decree, her blood to spill?
What solace this! The spheres respectful bow
And wear a human grief, that sicklies o'er the brow.

—23—

"A heavenly vision!" burst these soft sweet words
From every throat! They were subdued and low
In fear of glittering spears and shining swords.
The multitude immense bent like a bow,
And to the pavement fixed they seemed to grow;
As statues on their pedestals are wont.
Their cheeks with subtle fire are all aglow,
Like soldiers when they bear the battle's brunt;
And wear a disc of fire, like Mars his molten front.

—24—

Scarce had they sunk upon their knees to pray;
When women wept aloud and children screamed:
The instinct of the child in nature's way
Divined the reason, every eye there teemed.
One pandemonium wild the welkin seemed
With prayer and praise, and oaths of Englishmen.
Though overhead the god of day still beamed;
The demon with his hordes from hell's dark den,
Had turned earth's picked parterre, into the foulest fen.

JOAN OF ARC.

—25—

The purple pursing lip, the welling tear,
The eye suffused and sad, the moistened cheek,
The sobbing, simpering wail, were proof most clear
They granted all that she could crave or seek.
Consoled, her continent the pyre though bleak,
And men like fiends their vengeance ruthless wreak,
She stood like granite as when Greek meets Greek
And seemed a pyramid e'er at the stake
When fierce flames wave on wave were rolling like a lake.

—26—

How ghastly 'tis to see the groaning crowd
Turn leaden gray like ashes, when they gaze
Upon the crumbling pyre—her crimson shroud.
They suffocate for wild emotions craze,
And sympathy in flood the senses daze.
Oh wood! Deny the fire thy offices!
Aye! swallow all his flames! refuse to blaze!
And thus reneging, we will ever bless
Thy mercy and thy love, thy woman's tenderness.

—27—

Eight hundred lancers led the surging way.
O shame! O shame! Were it Dunois or Bar—
Were it young Charles decked out for Mars' array
And driving a begemmed and giant car,
Men might excuse this panoply of war.
Indeed methinks the world will never cease
To smile and sneer, that Joan's pure pretty star
Drew forth their files, like Argonauts the fleece;
As history's faithful page relates of ancient Greece.

—28—

A wall of bristling spears stands square behind,
In front, and all about; the multitude
Sways like the sea, while great tears blind
Their eyes, and burn their cheeks like roses' blood.
Four chargers draw the cart. The cowl and hood
Of a crazed monk flies in the frightened air.
Poor Loyseuleur repentant, would be good—
A Judas clamoring late in deep despair.
Bright bayonets fixed and keen, bid him of death beware.

JOAN OF ARC.

—29—

Adown the narrow street the car moved on;
The while Joan wrapt in ecstasy and prayer;
Her orisons rose like the lark at dawn,
Ascending to God's throne 'gainst sheer despair.
How sad it was a saint as pure as air.
Went to her death, burned brown as potter's clay!
The world its choicest spirits does not spare;
The prophets all as pariahs fell, they slay:
Their blood will roses grow, to cheer earth's dunnest day.

—30—

Behold the market place! A thousand spears
Like silver glitter in the morning sun;
The soldiers stand like statues as she nears
The heaving square. The scene a stone would stun,
Still Joan as peaceful was, as quiring nun.
She spoke so prettily of heaven's strands,
That she the heart of hatred would have won;
For women wailed and wept and wrung their hands
Like spirits of the dead, that writhe on burning strands.

—31—

Three platforms near the stake stand in the square;
The bishops and assessors keep the one;
The judges and Midi the other pair,
Then Joan brought up, the tragedy begun;
Judge Cauchon smiled, his work he now had done.
The dull old mart was then a bustling stage;
Where death would play his part e'er noonday sun.
The first act was the sermon of the sage;
The second history's strange, inhuman, mad outrage.

—32—

"Then Joan, go thou in peace," cried Nicholas,
"The Church abandons thee." But she had heard
His exhortation like chilled steel or brass.
She was a member sick. Mark ye the word!
And must be sundered from the human herd
Of loathsome lying monsters, did he say?
Yet true were this arraignment, not absurd.
Still Mid's sermon earned a good day's pay:
Henceforth fair history's hand oblivion's blight will stay.

—33—

And now Judge Cauchon with wrath in his heart
 Read the decree, that hurled Joan from the fold
 Of Holy Church into its counterpart—
 The cruel world. Concealed it, they had sold
 To Albion Joan the Maid, for filthy gold;
 And hounded her from tower to tower a slave.
 Ah no! Ah no! Rouen must not be told
 The shameful truth; for England they will save
 By burying her bleached bones, beneath the river's wave.

—34—

The proclamation read, she tottering fell
 Upon her knees and prayed for all;—
 For all her enemies, that not in hell
 Be their souls damned; nor like bolts on Charles fall
 Her death's disgrace. She answered heaven's call,
 And "went for pity into France" to save
 The Dauphin, and to end her kinsmen's brawl.
 Alas! the Harpies human at her rave;
 May God forgive their hate, she ceased in death to crave.

—35—

As sweet as sound of silvery bells, her voice
 Rose with the song of birds that steeped the air.
 'Twas May when nature's matins most rejoice;
 The sunshine drenched her robes divinely fair
 With molten gold. She stood an angel rare.
 "A cross! A cross!" she called nor called in vain;
 An English soldier answered prompt her prayer,
 And made a cross of faggots; he would fain
 Her last wish gratify, nor his own faith profane.

—36—

She pleaded with Massieu to have a cross
 Held up before her eyes in death. He sent
 A messenger to St. Savior; there was
 A crucifix within they gladly lent
 To solace her; o'er it she lowly bent
 To recommend her patriot's soul to God;
 With sore distraction in stern war forespent.
 She begs the priests to say one Mass; they nod
 Assent. How privileged to lighten her hard lot!

JOAN OF ARC.

—37—

Winchester, Beaulieu, Cauchon weep and bow;
Emotion moves the multitude, and tears
Like April rains dash every living brow;
Enough to quench the fire that oft appears,
In tyrants' savage breasts. But the end nears.
Massieu no longer can invent delay.
"Priests! Dine we here?" the English shout. He hears
And hastens. This brutality to prey
Outrivals the worst scenes, of old Rome's holiday.

—38—

The invocation for the dying rose
Above the square, like music in a nave
That multiplies each sound. Then as she goes
To death they counsel her "Be strong, be brave."
As yeasting billows of the sea oft rave
They pray and plead "Christ pity her and spare.
Ye saints and angels—martyrs in conclave,
Oh! intercede for her that she may bear
Her Hades' holocaust, like martyrs young and fair.

—39—

The little yellow candles in their hands,
Who teem in throngs the narrow street and square,
Are numerous as the lights on heaven's strands;
And fill the precincts with a ghastly glare.
So grand sublime was it, that saints would stare
To see their faith. Nor can history oft show
A spectacle so far beyond compare;
As Rouen's peasantry, who row on row
Besought that God grant Joan His grace for weal or woe.

—40—

But there were multitudes who did not kneel—
The English soldiers serried in array,
All dressed with tunics bright with brass and steel.
They seemed a solid wall along the way,
The hand of piety and love to stay
If mercy should prompt men to give relief.
Maybe their manly hearts did also pray,
And doing duty found a time for grief;
For human sympathy, of passions all is chief.

JOAN OF ARC.

—41—

From all around the square a thousand eyes
Look down upon the tragedy; the roof
Of every house a theatre of sighs;
In windows waving kerchiefs men give proof
That Rouen in her heart loves Joan. To move
Was death, so massed were men. Up in the air
Trees are alive with boys fearing reproof,
Who love the Maid and from their vantage stare
Down on the hecatomb, infernoing the square.

—42—

And now the tumult and fanfare have ceased.
Along the cobbled street the felon's cart
Has rumbling rolled; the sun high in the east.
The English guard with measured step the mart
At last reached and as cordon held apart
The sobbing multitude. Ere they arrived
The judges' mantles glistening with rich art,
Burned like pure gold, for Phoebus had connived.
Oh! that Jove's thunderbolts, had these stone creatures
rived!

—43—

"Now go in peace, the Church abandons you,"
Was Midi's peroration. Then they placed
The Maid apart, in high noon's garish view;
Who once the battlefields of France had graced.
As fallen from the faith she's now debased
And made a symbol of abandonment.
The scene they acted with barbaric haste;
Yet women fainted with emotions spent
To see these English wolves, on Joan, rare lamb, so bent.

—44—

This symbolism base charged men with dread;
Resentment leaped his banks in every eye.
Judge Cauchon rose, while all hearts broke and bled
To read the abjuration. But the lie
Might not be politic: she might deny
Her words by torture wrung, and so disgrace
And damn him now, and cause history to sigh.
He merely said: "Thy name we do efface
From scroll of Holy Church, and from her ranks all trace."

—45—

She sweetly pleaded and implored the throng
 To pray for her, if dying she should shrink
 From agonies' fangs and do her angels wrong.
 The multitude now pierced with pity sink
 In solemn supplication, so to drink
 Her full affliction's cup down to the dregs.
 'Tis heavenly wisdom when we're on the brink
 Of death, to seek God's pardon; for who begs
 Receives in measures pressed, His mercy ere he reck.

—46—

Massieu, Joan yielding Cauchon, blindly ran
 About confused, neglecting every form;
 The patriot all submerged in the true man,
 Who raved as mad in passion's heaving storm.
 She did not don death's garb—'gainst every norm:
 Nor did they e'en give judgment to the world,
 Whose sympathies concealed were strong and warm.
 Away by English guards yet was she hurled,
 Where all too soon the smoke, its flag of death unfurled.

—47—

The assessors fled at Cauchon's withering words,
 While shuddered the assembly like blown leaves;
 For men are one e'en as the flocks and herds,
 And danger in fierce phalanx mild men weaves.
 The bourreau now the bungling soon retrieves.
 Awhile the phantom white, to life still cleaves;—
 Ascends the steps as snarls the fire and flares.
 Like gaunt and ravening beast, that roaring rears and
 glares.

—48—

A hideous mitre they placed on her head;
 The executioner chained her to a post;
 And Massieu held the cross till she was dead;
 For of all earthly things she prized it most.
 Above the city raised she seemed a ghost,
 When she proclaimed: "My Voices are of God
 Who called me into France to rout the host
 Of Englishmen beneath whose chastening rod
 My country lay a corpse, a lifeless livid clod."

J O A N O F A R C.

—49—

Before me stands the pyre built high of wood,
By men well-trained in their hard hellish trade;
And damnable dread fate, of mercy nude,
Awaits brave Joan—Orlean's immortal Maid.
Fra Ladvenu and Isambard give aid;
Of happiness they plead in paradise.
Yet now alone through fierce fire she must wade
To heaven's shore. Isambard early flies
But Ladvenu dares death, till livid corpse she lies.

—50—

The bourreau, poor Joan chained, reels slowly down.
Her slender body writhes within its bonds;
For none at length can bide death's awful frown
Were he a breathing bust of beaten bronze.
Then drop their eyes strong men; like wizard-wands
They bend in circles as they moan and weep,
Behold they blench like wild ferns' frozen fronds,
While briny streamlets through their kerchiefs seep,
And they sink senseless down, like shipwrecks in the deep!

—51—

As lightnings pierce the storm's dark boiling clouds,
The flames shoot through the grimy rolling smoke;
At first odd beams, then masts in winding shrouds.
Ah! now her prayers the sleeping echoes woke,
And shrieks as frequent the dread silence broke;
The pyramid a rosy furnace turned
As in some forest fire a mighty oak.
The flames are famished, Joan a crisp is burned.
To heaven her soul is fled, her ashes Loire burned.

—52—

The pedestal was plaster whence the stake
Upright arose. The tense career of crowd
Can see the victim as men her noose make;
And wind the rope around the snow-white shroud
Grown to the gibbet. Standing strong and proud,
She seemed a statue motionless and fair;
Her head with wealth of tresses rich, unbowed.
The throng below now weep and weeping stare
Through tears that start and stand, like diamonds in a lair.

JOAN OF ARC.

—53—

As pitchy flames shoot up she calls aloud
Her dear Redeemer's name: "Sweet Jesus come
Console me! Blunt my agonies' edge; the cloud
Now suffocates, and I grow deathly numb,
My senses reel and sightless I become."
And so she called and cried e'en when the fire
Enveloped her; then she at last fell dumb.
The flames fanned by the winds rose in a spire,
And swiftly death did snatch, her from inferno's pyre.

—54—

Now it is o'er—all o'er—but she will arise,
Has risen—lives—rides her palfrey black.
The French and English see against the skies
Her pretty figure going to some sack,
In their mind's eye. Alack the day! Alack!
For not one of her allied enemies
Escaped the sword; before her they fell back;
She was in death as life, a planet in attack.

—55—

'Twas superstition's fangs that stung the Maid
To death; 'twas treason high that cruelly sold
To Albion Joan, and thirty pieces paid;
Not paltry silver now, but precious gold.
They set on Cauchon to ransack the fold
With bands of wolves as conscienceless as hell;
Aye! for that quality they all were polled;
A victim to their treachery's teeth she fell—
The great and guiltless Joan, though it was their death-
knell.

—56—

Joan's suffering, trial, death in old Rouen
Had stirred the city as storms stir the sea.
When it was thundered hoarsely by the throng:
"That as a martyr Dauphin Charles to free
She died," alarm like death was plain to see
In the betrayers' eyes, wild 'neath their tents.
They fain would from the wrath to come all flee:
They smote a patriot grand whose faith intense,
Had served her fatherland and God, with love immense.

JOAN OF ARC.

JOAN OF ARC.

