

On the Character and Hallucinations of Joan of Arc. By
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In a former paper read to a meeting of this Association I attempted to gather together what has been handed down to us about the nervous disorders and hallucinations of Mahomet,* of Luther, and of others great in history. It gave me much gratification to see that the paper formed the text of an interesting discussion. As we learn more of the influence of external circumstances and physical conditions on human belief and conduct, the records of the past are read in a new light. As science shows us the relation of events previously unknown, we see more surely how things really occurred; what was perplexing becomes clear; embellishments and additions fall off; and we are confirmed in the belief that the past was governed by the same laws as the present. Thus the knowledge of nervous diseases, and the experience gained by the study of hallucinations, illusions, and the errors and deceptions of the human mind, may explain some of the difficult problems of history.

In considering the claims of Joan of Arc to have been inspired by heaven, from a psychological aspect, it seems to me necessary to recall as much of her history as will illustrate the nature of these claims, and their effect upon a credulous age. Even the bare narration of many of the leading events of her life, so strangely mixed up with the superstitions of the times, will show the complete change which has taken place in our views of the supernatural. Events like these can never again occur in Europe, for the conditions under which they occurred will never return. The part played by this memorable heroine is unique in history.

The infant son of Henry V. of England and of the French Princess Catherine, had been proclaimed King of France, and at this time it was thought likely that he would really inherit the throne of his grandfather, though, as events proved, he only inherited his insanity. The English, in alliance with the Duke of Burgundy, had made the claims of their young prince to be acknowledged by well nigh all France north of

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the Loire. They had been besieging Orleans for seven months. The dauphin, son of Charles VI., was living in the castle of Chinon, with a scanty and precarious revenue, deserted by most of the great nobility. An attempt to effect a diversion in favour of the beleaguered town had ended in a severe defeat. It seemed left to its fate, and it was generally thought that it would fall in the end. The armies of England and Burgundy would then be free to cross the Loire, and drive the dauphin from the southern provinces, which still acknowledged his right. We read in the chronicles of the times that the prince himself meditated leaving France in the hands of his enemies, and seeking refuge in Spain or Scotland. When no one expected it, the tide of affairs, which seemed driving his cause to ruin, was turned to his triumph, and the most successful soldiers in Europe were put to flight by a peasant girl of eighteen years of age. Town after town was recovered to his rule, and Charles VII. was triumphantly crowned in the sacred seat of his ancestors, which a few months before seemed hopelessly in the power of his enemies.

The means by which this marvellous revolution was accomplished were simple enough, an appeal to passions and beliefs universally existing in a credulous age. For thirteen years France had been laid waste by the ferocity of the English invaders, and the fury of civil war. One disaster had followed another; the minds of the people were deeply stirred. There was a prophecy diffused amongst them that France, after being laid desolate by a woman, should be restored by a virgin. The woman was Isabella of Bavaria, the Queen-mother, who had taken the side of the English; and it appears that the virgin was for some time thought to be Margaret, the infant daughter of James the First of Scotland,* who had

* See the "Life and Death of King James the First of Scotland" (printed for the Maitland Club), 1837, pp. 6 and 7. See also Vol. iii., p. 340 of "Procès de Condamnation et de Réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite la Pucelle, publiés pour la première fois d'après les Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale suivis de tous les documents historiques qu'on a pu réunir, et accompagnés de notes et d'éclaircissements, par Jules Quicherat. Paris, 1841." This work, in five volumes, published by the Historical Society of France, is so complete that it will be needless to cite any other books on the subject. M. Quicherat has shown great learning and diligence. The notes supply all the information needed to elucidate the text, and there is an excellent index.

Out of the materials thus furnished has been written "The Life and Death of Jeanne d'Arc, called the Maid, by Harriet Parr," in two volumes. London, 1866. The authoress has shown much skill in seizing upon the striking and picturesque scenes in the life of the heroine. The narrative is vivid; but there is no attempt at psychological analysis.

been betrothed to the dauphin's son, an event which had perhaps excited the hope of a new contingent of those Scottish warriors who had kindled a gleam of hope through France by the victory of Beaugé, where the brother of the English King had been slain. Another version of the prophecy was actually quoted by Joan of Arc herself, when she was trying to persuade Robert of Baudricourt to send her to the dauphin: "Have you not heard," she said, "that it has been foretold that France should be destroyed by a woman, and restored by a virgin from the Marches of Lorraine?" The people recollected the prophecy, and this had a great effect in converting the inhabitants of Vaucouleurs to assist the wonderful peasant girl on her strange mission.

Joan, in fact, was born at Domrémy, on the borders of Lorraine. Her father and mother were labouring people. All her early associates belonged to the peasant class. She had three brothers, and, at least, one sister, who grew up. Her parents bore a good character; but Joan, though apparently instructed in religion, could neither read nor write. At an early age she was sent to keep sheep, and, as she became stronger, went to work in the fields with the plough and grape. Those who remembered her said that she was skilful at sewing, was kind to the poor, simple and modest, and very devout at religious exercises. The people of Domrémy took the side of the French; the neighbouring village of Marcey held for the Burgundians. The boys of the two hostile villages often used to fight, and come back hurt and bleeding. The inhabitants of Domrémy had to leave their village for four days for fear of their lives. Amidst the excitement of these painful events Joan grew up to womanhood. According to her own statement, given in the notes of her trial, she first heard a supernatural voice when she was thirteen years old. When she heard the voice she was much afraid. It was about mid-day, in her father's garden. She had fasted the day before. The voice appeared to come from the right side, towards the church. She seldom heard a voice without seeing a light, generally a bright one. The light came from the same side as the voice. When she was in a grove she could hear voices approaching her. She was fond of hearing bells, and the voices of saints and angels mingled with their chimes. As most of the process is given in Latin, we rarely know what were the original words which Joan fancied to be sounded in her ears. In one place it is

said that she often heard: "Fille Dé, va, va, va, je serai à ton ayde; va." "Daughter of God, go, go, go, I will aid you; go." This might readily be suggested by the sound of the bells, as in the old story of "Turn again, Whittington, thrice Mayor of London," or in the words of a royal poet her contemporary:—

" Suich a fanatasye
Fell me to mynd, yt ay me tho^t the bell
Said to me, Tell on man, quhat the befell."*

It would seem most probable that the first sounds heard by Joan were short sentences like these; but we learn from her own recollections that it was revealed to her in the first vision that she was to go to the rescue of France.

In a letter of Perceval de Boulainvilliers to Philip Visconti, Duke of Milan, dated 21st June, 1429, there is an account of Joan, which was probably taken from original observation, for Boulainvilliers held a high office at the court of the dauphin. He writes that the first revelation made was when Joan was twelve years of age. She agreed to try a race with some of her companions. She ran with such swiftness that one of the girls cried, "Joan, I see you flying over the ground." She stopped to take breath at the end of the meadow.

She thought she heard a boy's voice saying, "Joan, go home, for your mother needs you to help her." Thinking it must be her brother, or some other boy, she hastened home. Her mother asked her why she had left her sheep, to which the girl answered, "Did you not send for me?" Her mother said "No." Then, believing herself mistaken about the boy, and wishing to return to her companions, suddenly before her eyes a bright cloud or haze appeared, and from the cloud a voice came, saying: "Joan, you must lead another life, and do wonderful actions, for it is you whom the King of Heaven has chosen for the succour of France, and the help and protection of King Charles expelled from his dominions. You will put on male attire, and, taking arms, will be the leader of war. All things will be ruled by your counsel." It seems likely enough that these two accounts reproduce different circumstances of the same story, for Joan may have thought that the first voice, calling her to her mother, was not worth mentioning; or it may have been suppressed in the truncated notes of her trial.

* "The King's Quair." A poem: By James the First, King of Scots. Canto I., xi.

These visions returned again. The angel Michael brought with him St. Catherine and St. Margaret, who often visited her. She knew their voices, which were gentle and sweet, said that she had embraced and kissed them, and felt that they had a good odour. They exhorted her to lead a pure life, and to go to mass, and she made a vow of virginity to them. At her trial a great many questions were put to her about the appearance of these angels and saints, whether the angel wore a crown? and whether he had hair beneath it? and whether the hair was long or short? or whether the saints had rings in their ears, or wore dresses of the same cloth? When it came to such particulars Joan refused to answer, sometimes saying she was forbidden to answer, perhaps because the visions had a vague form, or that she feared some snare under their captious questioning. A few months before Joan's trial a woman in Paris had been burned because she said that the maid was doing the will of God, and that she herself had seen God, and that He wore clothes, which was treated as blasphemy. Joan, however, firmly maintained the reality of the apparitions. She said that Michael had the form of a proper man. "I saw them," she said to her judge, "with my own eyes, as plainly as I see you, and when they retired from me I wept, and much I wished that they would take me with them." She kissed the ground over which they had passed. Joan told no one of these visions, not even her confessor; but apparently her parents had their surmises or fears, for about two years after her first vision, when she was about fifteen, her mother told her that her father had dreamed that their daughter would go away with armed men to France. He told her brothers that he would rather she were drowned than that this should happen to her. She said that her father and mother watched her, and kept her in great subjection, and that they almost lost their senses when she went to Vaucouleurs. She said she never disobeyed them save in the case of the young man who wanted to marry her. He summoned her to the court at Toul, saying she had promised to marry him, which she denied on oath. The voices told her that she would gain her process. Apparently this young man had seen Joan at Neufchateau, where she had gone for fifteen days to live with a woman who kept an inn. Her enemies made a good deal of this residence at the inn, saying that she used to take horses to water, and thus learned to ride. It is not very clear how she learned to be so expert at

riding, as it seems she was, when she appeared before the dauphin at Chinon.

As time wore on the tumult of war came nearer and nearer, and the prolonged siege of Orleans kept the whole of France in a state of excitement. The voices told her twice or thrice a week to go to Robert of Baudricourt, the commandant at Vaucouleurs, and that he would help her.

She went to live with her uncle, who took her to Robert of Baudricourt. At first he was amused at her simplicity, and incredulous of her visions; but the voices encouraged her, and she gained some converts among the people of Vaucouleurs, so that when he received her favourably, after twice sending her away, the people bought her a horse, and got male attire made for her. Joan had an interview with the Duke of Lorraine, and Robert of Baudricourt sent her with six men with a letter to the dauphin at Chinon. It was a long and dangerous journey through a country infested by the enemy. She arrived at Chinon on the 6th March, 1429. We can understand the feeling of the dauphin on receiving this strange message. Here was a peasant girl of eighteen years of age, dressed like a man-at-arms, proclaiming that she had a revelation from on high to go and relieve Orleans and deliver France. Mere acquiescence would not do: she must have an army and convoy with her.

She is said to have singled out the dauphin amongst his courtiers, although some one else was deputed to play the king. At her trial Joan stated that she was enabled to do this by a voice which revealed the prince to her. Joan is described as being tall and comely, with dark hair, having a graceful and modest demeanour, and a sweet voice, generally speaking little, of a cheerful countenance, but readily moved to tears. She showed great power of enduring fatigue, and from the beginning seemed skilful at riding and in the use of weapons. She was repeatedly examined during three weeks by different dignitaries of the Church and doctors of theology, first at Chinon and then at Poitiers. The examination at Poitiers lasted three weeks, and was committed to writing. Unfortunately it could not be found when the information for her rehabilitation was taken. In the resumé which still remains to us, it is stated that the king had made inquiry about the life, birth, manners, and designs of the said maid, and had kept her near him for about six weeks, so that all people might observe her, whether learned men, ecclesiastics, religious people, soldiers, wives, widows, or others. Both in public and in private she has conversed with all people;

but in her they find no evil, nothing but goodness, humility, virginity, devotion, honest simplicity; and of her birth and her life some marvellous things are told. The king asked her for a sign, as Ahaaz did of God; but she said that she would show it before Orleans, and in no other place, for so God had ordered. They ought therefore to let her go to Orleans with her soldiers, hoping in God, for to doubt or to abandon her without appearance of evil would be to offend against the Holy Ghost, and make themselves unworthy of the aid of God, as Gamaliel said in his counsel to the Jews concerning the apostles.

From Chinon she sent a letter asking the priests to seek for a sword which was under the ground near the altar of St. Catherine of Fierbois. An armourer of Tours was sent on this errand, and a rusty sword was found near the place indicated. On the sword being cleaned, the priests said that the rust fell off with a readiness which they were willing to regard as supernatural. The sword was used by the maid till the siege of Paris, when she broke the blade on the back of a courtesan who was following her men-at-arms. One of the chroniclers says that Joan had never been at the Chapel of Fierbois; but she herself stated in her trial that she had passed through this place, and had heard mass at the chapel, when it is likely that she had learned or guessed that some arms were under the pavement, as it was common to bury armour and swords with the dead. The weapon had five crosses engraven on the blade, and Joan claimed that her voices had revealed this to her.*

Most historians mention this fact without any comment, and indeed it is difficult to give any reasonable explanation of it.

The surprising events that followed are related in every history of France. The convoy entered Orleans without the English daring to oppose her. Three of their bastiles or forts were carried by assault, and their army was in full retreat in ten days after the holy maid appeared with her awe-inspiring standard. The French believed her to be a prophetess; the English feared her as a witch. Knights and warriors gathered to fight under her banner, and this girl of eighteen sat at councils of war, and quoted her miraculous voices against the opinions of Dunois, Alençon, and La Hire.

When we remember that she was only an ignorant peasant girl of eighteen years of age it is astonishing how well she

* Respondit quod erat in terra, rubiginosus, habens quinque cruces; et hoc scivit per voces suas, Tome i. 235. See also iv., 129.

played her part. Before the court at Chinon, before the doctors of theology at Poitiers, with the armed convoy at Orleans, and in the battles and sieges which followed, Joan had ever sustained and increased her reputation. To use the words of an old chronicler,* "She rode always in complete armour, as much or more than any captain of the time, and when one spoke of war, or putting troops in order, she made it to be heard and seen that she knew what she was about, and when the cry of arms was sounded she was the first and readiest, whether on foot or on horseback." In the *procès de réhabilitation* we have the testimony of the renowned generals under whom the English were driven out of France, taken about twenty-five years after the death of the heroine. The Duke of Alençon, who bore her a warm friendship, said that in war she acted as cautiously and prudently as if she had been a captain who had borne arms for twenty or thirty years, and that she was especially skilful in the preparation of artillery.

Similar testimony was given by Count Dunois, who stated his belief in her divine mission. Some very curious testimony was given by Jean d'Aulon, a valiant and worthy gentleman of Languedoc, who was commissioned by the king to attend on Joan, and who followed her everywhere, guarded her in battle, and was taken prisoner along with her. After bearing witness to the purity of her life, and recording his belief that it was impossible that so young a girl could do such deeds without the will and help of our Lord, he said that Joan had told him that when she had on hand some difficult undertaking, her council told her what she ought to do. D'Aulon asked her who were her council? She answered that there were three advisers, of whom one always remained with her; the other went and came often to her, and visited her; and the third was the one with whom the two others deliberated. It happened that once upon a time D'Aulon begged of her that she would show him her council. She answered that he was not worthy nor virtuous enough to behold them, upon which he ceased to speak or inquire about it. From the words used these councillors seemed to be of the male sex. At the attack on St. Pierre-le-Moustier the French were driven back, and D'Aulon was wounded on the heel; but observing that the maid was almost left alone, he got on a horse and rode towards her, asking her what she was doing there alone, and why she

* Tome iv., p. 248.

did not retire like the others? Joan, after having taken her helmet from her head, answered that she was not alone, that she had still in her company fifty thousand of her people, and that she would not go away until she had taken the town. D'Aulon was sure that at that time, whatever she said, she had not with her any more than four or five men. This he knew for certain, as well as several others who likewise saw her. She, however, refused to go away, and got the soldiers to lay a bridge over the ditches, and storm the town at this very place.

D'Aulon quoted a speech of hers to the celebrated Dunois: "Bastard! bastard! in the name of God, I command you that whenever you know of the coming of Falstaff you will let me know; for if he passes without me knowing I promise you that I will make your head be taken off." There was nothing, in the usage of these times, offensive in the title of bastard for one who claimed descent from a prince of the blood; but for a peasant girl to use such language to a man of rank, apparently without giving offence, showed what a high tone the maid assumed as a messenger from heaven. D'Aulon goes on to tell, that after retiring to sleep, the maid started up, saying that she had been warned by her council to go against the English, but that she did not know whether to go against the bastiles or against Falstaff, who came to victual them. She made him put on her armour, and rode out to the gate of Orleans. On her way she met a soldier coming in badly wounded, when she said that she never saw the blood of a Frenchman without her hair standing on end. A short time after the bastile of St. Loup was carried by assault.

Despite the coarse abuse of the English, her virginity was beyond dispute; but menstruation seems never to have occurred.* Schiller, in his beautiful drama, "Die Jung frau

* Dominus Johannes Massieu Curatus ecclesiæ parochialis Sancti Candidi Senioris Rothomagensis dicit et deponit, quod bene scit quod fuit visitata, an esset virgo vel non, per Matronas seu obstetrices, et hoc ex ordinatione ducissæ Bedfordiæ, et signanter per Annam Bavon et aliam matronam de cujus nomine non recordatur. Et post visitationem, retulerunt quod erat virgo et integra, et ea audivit referri per eandem Annam; et propter hoc, ipsa ducissa Bedfordiæ fecit inhiberi custodibus et aliis ne aliquam violentiam sibi afferrent. Tome iii., p. 155. Several other witnesses testified to the same effect. See also iii., 102 and iii., 102 and 209. D'Aulon dit encores plus qu' il a oy dire à plusieurs femmes, qui ladicté Pucelle ont veue par plusieurs foiz nue, et sceu de ses secretz, que oncques n' avoit eu la secrecte maladie des femmes et que jamais nul n' en peut riens cognoistre ou appercevoir par ses habillemens, ne aultrement. Tome iii., p. 219.

von Orleans," makes Dunois and La Hire rivals to gain the love of the warlike maid, and there is a striking scene where the amazon shows a tenderness for a vanquished foe, the English leader Lionel. In the Procès de Réhabilitation, Dunois, Alençon, and D'Aulon declared that her conduct repressed every irregular desire, and that they never felt any passion for her. As she was not without personal attractions, they were willing to recognise in this something of the supernatural.

Many instances might be given of the highly sensitive temperament of the heroine. John Pasquerel, an Augustan monk, who had acted as her confessor, said that when she was wounded by an arrow above the breast at Orleans she was afraid, and wept. When Glansdale, the English captain, who had coarsely abused her from the bastille, fell into the Loire trying to escape and was drowned, she began to weep for his soul. When she saw the English soldiers lying wounded she had great compassion, and would get them a confessor. She herself often heard mass, and went to confession; and tried to get the soldiers to do the same. She would not suffer profane language, and had the credit of getting La Hire to give up swearing. She had such a horror of plundering that, when a Scotsman told her she had eaten of a calf obtained in this way, she was very angry, and wished to strike the said Scot.

Joan had a truly feminine dislike to the girls who followed the camp. Her enemies accused her of being too proud, and fond of fine armour and trappings.* Save in matters pertaining to war, she was simple and credulous; but no one, whether friend or foe, seems to have thought her insane.

(To be continued.)

* Jean Rogier, in his *Memoirs*, quotes a letter of the Chancellor of France, who was an archbishop, about the taking of Joan of Arc. He says: "que Dieu avait souffert prendre Jehanne la Pucelle pour ce qu'el s'estoit constitué en orgueil, et pour les riches habitz qu'el avoit pris." Tome v., p. 169.

M. Quicherat quotes from an old chronicle written evidently by one who favoured the Burgundian party, and disliked Joan, that "quant aucun de ses gens mesprenoit, elle frappoit dessus de son baston grans coups, en manière de femme très cruelle." Tome iv., p. 469.