

**JOAN OF
ARC; PP. 2-191**

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Joan of Arc; pp. 2-191 by L. Petit de Julleville

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JOAN OF ARC

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collected during the case for rehabilitation,¹ remembering that if it adds in some measure to her glory it can contribute few new features to her moral stature, the beauty of which was sufficiently apparent in her attitude and her answers at the trial, and indeed stood out with an intensity of life and truth beyond the reach of any document. We shall not, however, neglect the accounts of contemporary chroniclers, though it is impossible not to regret that their indirect and second-hand evidence should so frequently be lifeless and even at times inaccurate. Still, they are agreed upon all the essential points; and, though a summary of facts is not our main object, it is at least a means to an end, for it is by dwelling upon these facts, facts which, except for a few unimportant details, are now thoroughly elucidated, that we shall endeavour to enter into the thoughts, emotions and aspirations of the saint and heroine.

At the first sitting² of the court at the trial which was to end in her martyrdom, Joan of Arc introduced herself to her judges: "In my own country," she said, "they used to call me Jeannette; since my arrival in France I have been called Jeanne. I was born at Domremy, which makes one along with Greux; the principal church is at Greux. My father's name is Jacques d'Arc,³ my mother's

¹ No evidence was heard during the case for conviction.

² Wednesday, 21st February 1431.

³ Some historians erroneously write "Jeanne Darc" in one word, so as to confer on Joan a patent of plebeian birth, in which they make a double mistake. On the one hand, the particle does not signify nobility, nor its absence plebeian birth; and on the other

Isabelle;¹ I believe myself to be about nineteen years of age."

The little village of Domremy is divided by a stream which flows into the Meuse. The part on the north side of the stream was held directly from the King of France, and was comprised in the bailiwick of Chaumont-en-Bassigny; that on the south was held of the Duke of Bar, a vassal of the King of France. Just across the Meuse was Lorraine, an independent country. Joan of Arc was in no way a native of Lorraine.² The cottage where she was born formed part of the direct inheritance of the King of France. It is true that the stream which separated it from the territory of Bar flows at the very door of the house,³ but even had she been a native of Bar (which she was not) this would not have made her a Lorrainian. Lorraine began at the hand, the apostrophe was unknown in the fifteenth century, and "duc D'Orleans" was written "duc dorleans" just as "Jeanne d'Arc" was written "Jeanne Darc." "Darc," however, is meaningless. The family of Joan's father probably came originally from Arc in the territory of Bar between Chaumont and Langres. Her father, Jacques, was born at Ceffonds near Montierender (Haute Marne).

¹ Isabelle Romée, of Vouthon, near Domremy.

² See the explicit words of the letter sent to the Duke of Milan by the Steward of Berry, Percival de Boulainvilliers (21st June 1429); He says:—"She was born in a small village of the name of Domremy, in the bailiwick of Bessigny, on this side of, and not far from the frontiers of the Kingdom of France, on the banks of the river Meuse near Lorraine" (Quicherat, *Œuvres de Jeanne d'Arc*, vol. v. 116). That Domremy was later included in Lorraine matters little. Joan was born a Frenchwoman, and therefore not a Lorrainian. Lorraine was territory of the Empire.

³ The actual house was rebuilt in 1480 on the site of the one in which Joan was born, part of which has survived in the reconstruction.

neighbouring village of Maxey upon the right bank of the Meuse, where prayers were said for the victory of the English and the Burgundians. Greux and Domremy were loyal to the French king.¹ The children of Maxey and those of Greux used to fight battles among themselves, several of which were witnessed by Joan, who recalled them to her memory when speaking to her judges. "I have seen them come back wounded and covered with blood," she said. These childish frays, however, do not seem to have had any great influence upon the silent, self-centred, and entirely inward and personal development of her warlike mission and her patriotism.²

¹ With the sole exception of one man, who to Joan's great indignation belonged to the Burgundian party.

² We know that Joan obtained from the king the favour of exempting Domremy and Greux from feudal taxation. The king could not have exempted from taxes any village which was not held directly from his crown. Domremy lost this privilege when Charles IX. ceded the village to the Duke of Lorraine and Bar (25th Jan. 1571). It claimed the restoration of this right of exemption, which was a title of honour as well, when, after the death of Stanislas, Lorraine became French. The terms of the royal letter remove all doubts as to the nationality of Joan of Arc: "Charles, etc., to the bailiff of Chaumont, etc., we desire to inform you that by the favour and at the request of our well-beloved Joan the Maid, and for the great, mighty, notable and profitable services she has rendered and is daily rendering us for the recovery of our domain, we have granted and do hereby grant special privileges to the peasants and inhabitants of the town and village of Greux and Domremy, in the said province of Chaumont-en-Bassigny, of which the said Joan is a native, that they be henceforward free, clear and exempt from all taxes, aids, subsidies and subventions levied or to be levied upon the said parish." The letters were given at Chateau-Thierry, 31st July 1429.

Jacques d'Arc and Isabelle Romée were small farmers owning a cottage and fifty acres of land, consisting of field, wood, and meadow, which they cultivated themselves, toiling with their own hands. They were poor but not needy. Jacques d'Arc held a position of honour in his little village; he was styled *doyen*, a title which placed him second only to the mayor and the sheriff. He had three sons, Jacques, Jean and Pierre, and two daughters, Catherine¹ and Joan. The latter, the younger of the two, was probably born on the 6th of January 1412.² She was baptized in the church at Domremy, and, according to a custom general at the time, had four godfathers and four godmothers. She grew up among rustic pleasures and labours without receiving any education; she was never able either to read or write. She could, however, sew and spin admirably. "In sewing and spinning," she proudly tells her judges,³ "I will match myself against any woman in Rouen." "In my father's house," she continues, "I was occupied with household duties, I did not go into the fields to tend the flocks." She frequently reverts to this fact,⁴ which I notice because legend has been apt to represent her as

¹ It is believed that this elder sister died before Joan left home (see St Luce, *Jeanne d'Arc à Domremy*, p. 35). Yet Joan spoke later to Dunois of a sister who was alive; see *post*, p. 66.

² Date established upon the evidence of the letter of Boulainvilliers to the Duke of Milan quoted above.

³ First hearing, 21st Feb. 1431.

⁴ "Did you drive the cattle into the fields?"—"No, not since I grew up, and had reached years of discretion. I cannot remember now whether I tended them when I was a child" (3rd hearing, Quicherat, *Procès*, etc., vol. i. p. 66).

a shepherdess, whereas she was in reality more of a housewife. She received her religious instruction solely from her mother, from whom she learned her prayers. She knew Our Father, Hail Mary and the Creed by heart. Further than that her education did not go; and in after years the equivocal questions of her judges upon the "Church Militant" were the cause of her undoing, for, failing to understand the meaning of these words, she made two or three imprudent answers of which an unfair advantage was taken.

In this simple life her faith and her piety were remarkable even from childhood. Whatever time she could spare from her work she spent in church; she was constantly seen absorbed in prayer, and the only fault which her companions could find with her was that she was too grave and devout. She loved the sound of the church bells, because they were a call to prayer; and used to give the bell-ringer little presents, such as wool from her own sheep, that he might perform his duties with great regularity. As charitable as she was pious, she loved the poor tenderly, and gave as much as she was able to in alms. Many a time she put some homeless and wretched creature into her bed and spent the night upon the hearth. When twelve years old she ceased to join in the games of the boys and girls of her own age, and was seen no longer dancing under the "Fairy Tree." She still followed the happy band of children to it, but held somewhat aloof, not morosely, but pensively.

This "Fairy Tree" plays an important part in the