

LESSONS FROM WOMEN'S LIVES

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Lessons from women's lives by Sarah J. Hale

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SARAH J. HALE

**LESSONS FROM
WOMEN'S LIVES**



Lessons from Women's Lives—Frontispiece.

LESSONS
FROM WOMEN'S LIVES.

BY
SARAH J. HALF,
AUTHRESS OF "WOMEN'S RECORD," ETC.



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JOAN OF ARC.



JOAN OF ARC, "Maid of Orleans," was born in 1410, at the little village of Domremy, in Lorraine. Her father was named Jacques d'Arc, and his wife, Isabella Rómeé. She was piously brought up by her mother, and was often accustomed to nurse the sick, assist the poor, receive travellers, and take care of her father's flock of sheep; but she was generally employed in sewing or spinning. She also spent a great deal of time in a chestnut grove near her father's cottage. She was noted, even when a child, for the sweetness of her temper, her prudence, her industry, and her devotion.

During that period of anarchy in France when the supreme power, which had fallen from the hands of a monarch deprived of his reason, was disputed for by the rival houses of Orleans and Burgundy, the con-

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tending parties carried on war more by murder and massacre than by regular battles. When an army was wanted, both had recourse to the English, and these conquering strangers made the unfortunate French feel still deeper the horrors and ravages of war. At first the popular feeling was undecided ; but when, on the death of Charles VI., the crown fell to a young prince who adopted the Armagnac side, whilst the house of Burgundy had sworn allegiance to a foreigner (Henry V.) as king of France, then, indeed, the wishes and interests of all the French were in favour of the Armagnacs, or the truly patriotic party. Remote as was the village of Domremy, it was still interested in the issue of the struggle. It was decidedly Armagnac, and was strengthened in this sentiment by the rivalry of a neighbouring village which adopted Burgundian colours.

Political and party interests were thus forced upon the enthusiastic mind of Joan, and mingled with the pious legends which she had caught from the traditions of the Virgin. A prophecy was current that a virgin should rid France of its enemies, and this prediction seems to have been realised by its effect upon the mind of Joan. The girl, by her own account, was about thirteen when a supernatural vision first appeared to her. She describes it as a great light, accompanied by a voice telling her to be devout and good, and