

**JEANNE D'ARC; THE
STORY OF HER
LIFE AND DEATH**

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Jeanne d'Arc; The Story of Her Life and Death by Agnes Sadlier

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AGNES SADLIER

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STORY OF HER
LIFE AND DEATH**

JEANNE d'ARC

The Story
of
Her Life and Death

By
AGNES SADLIER

Properly speaking, there is no History, only Biography.
Emerson.



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CONTENTS.

BOOK I.

THE PEASANT MAID.

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	9
I. CHILDHOOD OF JEANNE d'ARC	33
II. THE VOICES	41
III. JEANNE ENTERS UPON HER MISSION	49
IV. JEANNE MEETS THE KING	56
V. JEANNE IS EXAMINED BY THE DOCTORS AT POTTIERS	63
VI. PREPARATIONS FOR WAR	71

BOOK II.

THE WARRIOR.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. JEANNE ENTERS ORLEANS	83
II. THE STRUGGLE FOR ORLEANS	91
III. THE DELIVERANCE OF ORLEANS	101
IV. THE CAMPAIGN ON THE LOIRE	111
V. THE CORONATION	123
VI. FURTHER TRIUMPHS	135
VII. THE MARCH TO PARIS	149
VIII. JEANNE'S LAST DAYS AT COURT	159
IX. COMPIÈGNE	167

BOOK III.

THE MARTYR.

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. JEANNE IS SOLD TO THE ENGLISH .	. 181
II. PREPARATIONS FOR JEANNE'S TRIAL	. 190
III. THE TRIAL 204
IV. RE-EXAMINATION 223
V. MARTYRDOM 243
REHABILITATION 259

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INTRODUCTION.

IN order to understand the condition of France in the fifteenth century, when Jeanne d' Arc, the noblest figure of profane history, appeared, and how it was that so powerful and wealthy a country had sunk to the need of miraculous interposition to free her from the yoke of the invader, we must go back to the fourteenth century. In the year 1314, Philip the Fair, King of France, died, leaving three sons. None of these had sons, so that they successively occupied the throne. In 1328, the youngest was laid to rest in St. Denis, and the house of Capet, for the first time, since, from the ruins of the House of Charlemagne, it had risen to the kingship, was without any direct heir. It is true, each of these three sons of Philip had left daughters, but these did not count, because there was a law, known as the Salic law, from the Salian Franks, the most powerful of the great confederacy of tribes which had followed Clovis to the conquest of Gaul, which prohibited women from reigning.

After due consideration, the twelve peers of France conferred the crown on Philip of Valois, the nephew of Philip the Fair, and his nearest kinsman in the male line. The granddaughters of Philip the Fair yielded to their cousin, in consideration of certain concessions made to them, and a critical time

seems to have been happily passed through, when a new claimant for the French crown appeared.

This was no less a personage than the splendid young king of England, Edward the Third, who grounded his claim on his descent from his mother, Isabella of France, daughter of Philip the Fair. In vain it was represented to him that his mother could not transmit a right that she had never possessed ; he retorted that she had transmitted the royal blood which gave her son a right to the crown which her sex alone forbade her to assume. It was never very difficult to tempt an English king into war with France, and the end of the argument was that Edward assumed the title of King of France, quartered the royal lilies of that country on his shield, and declared war against Philip of Valois. During that king's reign, victory rested with Edward. The glory of Crécy (1346) added its lustre to English annals, while the capture of the strong city of Calais insured the invaders a permanent advantage by giving them a point of arrival, of departure, of occupancy, of provisioning, and of refuge, in the enemy's country.

Under King John, the son and successor of Philip of Valois, French arms fared still worse, for at their terrible defeat at the battle of Poitiers, (1356) John himself was taken prisoner. Humiliating as this was to France, however, it was really a blessing in disguise, for it brought to the governing of the Kingdom, the king's eldest son, the dauphin Charles. It is true his gifts were not for war ; he had been guilty of running away from the field of Poitiers, a fact