

STORIES FROM
FRENCH HISTORY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

IN PRAISE OF QUEEN CLOTHILDE AND KING CLOVIS ...	2
IN PRAISE OF CHARLEMAGNE.....	7
IN PRAISE OF ST. LOUIS IX, KING OF FRANCE	13
IN PRAISE OF JEANNE D'ARC, THE MAID OF ORLEANS	18
IN PRAISE OF AND PITY FOR THE HUGUENOTS.....	25
IN PRAISE OF FREEDOM AND IN PITY FOR MARIE ANTOINETTE	31
IN PRAISE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE	35

A STORY IN PRAISE OF QUEEN CLOTHILDE AND KING CLOVIS

Once upon a time (and all this that you are about to read is true) there was a large wild country in Europe called the country of Gaul.

It lay between sea and sea, between mountain and mountain; and if you would know the names of the seas, they are the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and that part of the Atlantic Ocean which is called to-day the English Channel. And if you would know the names of the mountains, they are the Pyrenees and the Alps.

Between these boundaries then lay the wild country of Gaul. It was made up of many other high mountains besides deep valleys and great plains, through which flowed mighty rivers. These plains were darkened by great forests where fierce beasts roamed—wild oxen and elk, wolves, and swine that were fiercer than wolves.

Fierce men roamed there too; half-naked savages who hunted and killed the wild beasts so they might eat and live. And as some wild animals gather together in herds, so these wild men herded together in tribes; and of the number of tribes that lived in Gaul in that far-away time I cannot tell you, there were so many of them.

These savages made for themselves huts of wood and of clay and roofed them over with branches and straw. Round their rude huts they heaped a rough wall made of wood and earth and stones. This helped to keep away enemies, either men or beasts, from their camp or village.

No tribe stayed long in one place. So soon as all the eatable wild beasts were killed, so soon as all the flocks and herds were used up, then word was given to move. Away wandered the tribe to some more fruitful spot; and if the

coveted place was already occupied by another tribe, then battles were fought again and again and again until one or the other side proved victorious. So it was that these tribes of Gaul were forever wandering and forever fighting.

In time vast hordes of them spread towards the south, swarming over the Alps into Italy. So many were there of them, so fiercely did they fight, and so often did they win, that they even threatened the sacred city of Rome itself. Never fear but that they were driven back again to their own wild country by the brave Romans. Nay, more, in the great days of Julius Caesar they were conquered by him, their country was taken possession of by him, Roman Governors ruled over them, Roman soldiers became their companions.

So it came about that the wild barbarians were taught a great many useful things by their conquerors. They learnt how to build towns and roads and bridges, how to fight with more strength and cunning and less savagery; they learnt to speak the Roman language, to use the Roman laws.

And the time of this world went on; years passed; and Rome ceased to bring forth strong men; great generals there were none; the Roman soldiers forgot their old-time skill in battle; the Roman Governors knew no more the virtue of honourable ruling; the might and the power of ancient Rome was over, and forever.

Then the conquered men of Gaul grew restless. They began to fret against the indignity of being ruled by their foes, they began to long and to dream and to plan for freedom, for rulers and laws of their own making.

There were three great tribes or peoples in Gaul at that time, and these three tribes were divided up again many times into smaller tribes. The names of the three great tribes in Gaul were these—the Visigoths, the Burgundians, and the Franks.

Now from the last of these great peoples, from a small tribe called the Salian Franks, sprang Clovis, the strong man, the chief who at last became king over the whole of Gaul. He

came of a brave stock. His grandfather Meroveus gave the name Merovingian to a line of kings, and of this line Clovis was the greatest.

This same Meroveus won great honour in the war against Attila the fierce King of the Huns. When that terrible hero invaded Gaul with his savage host Meroveus gloriously drove him back again into his wilds.

After Meroveus came Childeric, his son, of whom many a brave battle tale might be told. When Clovis was but fifteen years old this warrior died. Young as he was, the stern warriors of Childeric proclaimed his son their leader, carrying him up and down the village upon a shield as a sign thereof.

This showed that he had proved himself worthy of honour in battle even then, for at that time chieftainship—nay, even kingship, was won by a man's own strength and might and not by inheritance from his father.

From the first Clovis must have dreamed of the great achievements in war, of the power and greatness which should be his. He must have early shown his ambitious spirit, for it was not long before his name became known to kings and leaders of great tribes. He led his warriors, or 'leudes' as they were called, to battle and victory many and many a time, gaining more lands and more power; so that when one fine day he sent his messengers to the King of the Burgundians demanding the hand of his fair niece in marriage, that king did not refuse the request, and in good time the beautiful Princess Clothilde became the wife of King Clovis.

Now Clothilde was a Christian. Clovis was a pagan. He worshipped, he and all his warriors with him, at the altars of strange gods, made of wood and stone.

In the fifth century, in the time of Clovis, most men were pagans. Nevertheless the Church of Christ had already begun to show some little power. Its bishops and priests were often rich and powerful men owning great lands and much treasure. Clovis, although he did not agree with their faith, was

always ready to help them when he could, and this even before he married Clothilde. Afterwards, you will understand, he was more than ever their very good friend.

This made the good bishops hope that one day Clothilde would persuade her stern husband to turn Christian—for he loved her dearly, and she him. And this was her prayer night and day for many and many a year: "Dear God, make of Clovis a good Christian, that he may live only to honour Thy Church and glorify Thy name, here on earth, and afterwards in Heaven."

Not only did Clothilde pray and fast, and do good deeds of charity in the hope that her prayers might be granted, but she spared no pains, using all her sweet arts of speech and manner to persuade her lord to desert the false gods of his fathers and worship the true God. All her labours were in vain; yet when her first little son was born, Clothilde's hopes rose high. Surely Clovis could deny her nothing at such a joyous time. So she came to him, speaking fair. "In a little while," she said, "the holy Bishop of Rheims, the good St. Remy, will come to baptize our babe. O good my lord, wilt thou not let him baptize thee also upon that same most joyous day?"

"Nay," answered the King, but gently, "baptize the child an thou must; as for me, I will worship my father's gods or none. Verily they have served me well in battle, forever leading me to victory, and shall I desert them for no cause save a woman's fancy?"

So the child alone was baptized, and was christened Ingomer by the holy bishop. This much had Clothilde for comfort, yet not for long; for very soon after the little Ingomer sickened and died, and when Clovis came back from some war in triumph there was no little son awaiting him to rejoice his proud heart. The Queen herself, white and sorrowful, told him of their loss.

"What have you to say for your God now?" cried Clovis, beside himself with anger and grief. "He has killed my

son, my first-born son. You and your bishops make great ado about His power and might. You say He hears all your prayers and answers them. Now see what He has done for you. See how He has answered your prayers. You took my son and baptized him; now behold him—dead. My gods were angered and they killed him; your God was too weak to prevent them."

Then answered the Queen, grown very white and still: "I bear up against my sorrow," she said, and these are her very words;—"I bear up against my sorrow, because I believe in the wisdom and goodness of the true God. Ingomer is with the whitest angels in heaven."

Upon this Clovis fell to silence, nor did he reproach the Queen again. Nevertheless, he would never suffer her to speak of her faith or her God for many a long and weary month. It seemed as if he were more determined than ever to worship his own gods. And yet for all his seeming sternness, methinks the stern King, even in the midst of his wars and ambitious dreams, must have grown more inclined towards the new religion than he let his wife suspect, for Clothilde never lost heart. She never ceased to believe that one day her prayers would be granted and Clovis would become a Christian. Her hopefulness, her gentleness, her strength to bear sorrow impressed Clovis in spite of himself. It made him think about this new religion and wonder what there was in it which could make a weak woman so strong.

All the while he fought many desperate battles for his ambition's sake, winning power and fame in the land. Men feared him, too, for he showed little mercy to his enemies, and for this we must not unduly blame him. In those days, soldiers, even Christian soldiers, thought but little of the virtue of gentleness and forgiveness.

Not so very long after Prince Chlodimir, his second son, was born, the Allemans, a strong and savage German tribe, crossed over the River Rhine in great numbers, and attacked and made havoc among the Frank settlements. They coveted these rich and pleasant lands for themselves.

Clovis no sooner heard of the invasion than he made instantly ready to march against them. In full battle array he came to take leave of Clothilde and his small son.



IN FULL BATTLE ARRAY HE CAME TO TAKE LEAVE OF CLOTHILDE AND HIS SMALL SON.

Clovis, like most of the Franks, was tall and fair and fierce-looking. His yellow hair fell in two long braids to his waist, his moustache, too, was long and fair. He wore a helmet on his head, an axe at his belt and a two edged sword. He

carried also a javelin, a lance and a shield. His cloak and vest were made of beautiful fur, his tunic of linen, and his leather shoes were bound with long and wide leather thongs reaching from ankle to knee.

Before he left her, Clothilde, again braving his displeasure, spoke her old request. She feared lest one day he might fall in battle unbaptized, and that for her would indeed be a great sorrow—separating them even in death.

"How canst thou beg me to desert my own gods at this most dangerous time?" cried Clovis when the Queen had spoken. "Know'st not that these Allemans are fierce and terrible foes? Though we fear them not, we may not despise them. They must be conquered, else we shall know neither peace nor freedom in this land ever again. Yet you ask me to desert my strong gods now when I most need them!"

"There is only one God, the Lord Jesus Christ," said Clothilde steadfastly, "mighty in battle—strong to save."

Thereupon she fell on her knees before the King, crying, "Oh, for the sake of thy little son, and the love we bear him, wilt thou not make thy wife blessed?"

Now the young Chlodimir had been baptized, and still he lived, a strong and lusty babe. Moreover, with every year, the bishops of the Church gained more power and influence in the world. Their friendship and help were not to be despised. Clovis knew this, and he knew that he could count on them to help him well should he turn Christian; he also loved his fair wife dearly and secretly longed to make her happy. Nevertheless he did not quite dare to let go of his old gods. He believed they had helped him to win many of his battles. Thus it was that, after thinking for a while, he said, "I cannot do all thou wouldst have me do, Clothilde, but this much I promise thee: if ever in battle I do call upon my gods and they answer me not; if I find that I and all my warriors are in sore danger of defeat, then will I call upon thy God, and if He hear my prayer

and succour me, Him will I worship and none other for evermore."

And the Queen answered, "It is well; I am content."

And now Clothilde serenely waited, sure that her prayers were to be answered at last, while, Clovis marched away to fight the Allemans.

These barbarians fought like savage heroes, careless of death, eager for victory. Clovis had set himself no easy task.

In one of their fiercest encounters the King suddenly became aware that the battle was going against him. His keen eye saw that where the blows rained thickest the Franks were giving way; they were being slowly but steadily beaten back by the Allemans.

With shouts and fierce cries Clovis flung himself into the struggle, and still, in spite of his bravery, his warriors were forced back by these desperate enemies.

Then the King called loudly upon his gods for help. They vouchsafed him no answer. Again and again, hot with anger, he called; all in vain. In his despair Clovis remembered Clothilde and his promise. "Thou God of Clothilde," he thundered, and his voice could be heard even above the noise of battle, "now do I call upon Thee for aid. Award me the victory and I turn from my gods and follow Thee for ever." O miracle! Even as he spoke the tide of battle turned. Led by Clovis, the Franks with new courage rallied, and gathering strength with every inch of recovered ground at last put their foes to flight.

Clovis soon vanquished the Allemans altogether and it was not long before they were forced to recross the Rhine and return to their own country.

The King faithfully kept his promise. When he returned victorious to Clothilde he told her the good news, and one day the holy Bishop St. Remy baptized him, and three thousand of his warriors with him, in the Cathedral at Rheims.

It was a great and glorious day. Judge for yourselves whether Clothilde rejoiced or no, and whether she did not praise God in prayer and good deeds all the rest of her life. If you look you will find her name written down among the saints in the Calendar of the Roman Catholic Church.

As for Clovis, the good bishop told him on his baptism to "hate those gods which he had adored, and adore that one which he had hated"; but whether he obeyed this command faithfully, it is not for me to say, nor whether, having become a Christian, he grew gentler and more forgiving than before. The age in which he lived was a fierce and cruel one, and one so far away that we may not judge too harshly of his deeds. Certainly, he did one good thing, and for that he is now remembered. By the help of the Church, by his own strength and prowess, by the aid of his own cunning brain, using treachery and truth alike, Clovis, before he died, accomplished his end. He ruled over the whole of Gaul. He made a divided and turbulent country into some likeness of a united kingdom. He, drawing, as it were, upon the large white sheet of the history of his country, till then scarcely marked save by scribbles—he, drawing then, worked out a rough and shadowy outline upon it. And from this rough and shadowy outline was shaped, in time, the fair and comely form of the Kingdom of France.

CHAPTER II

A STORY IN PRAISE OF CHARLEMAGNE

Part of Which is Taken from the Tale of the Monk of Gaul

In this story you shall first hear of the hatred Desiderius, King of Lombardy, nourished in his heart for Charlemagne, King of all the Franks, and the reason thereof; then it shall be told how Desiderius plotted against Charlemagne to compass his ruin by bringing division and strife into his realm; lastly shall be discovered to you something of the great power and might of that glorious Emperor, King Charlemagne, together with the story of his victory over Desiderius.

Had Desiderius known, as we know now, the great genius of King Charlemagne; had he known that the great Frank was to fight battle after battle, gain victory after victory, win country after country, until, at last, Italy, Saxony, Brittany, Bavaria, Spain, Greece, Hungary, besides other smaller powers, hailed him as conqueror, fighting his battles, obeying his laws,—had Desiderius known all this, had he rightly understood the power that was in the man, would he have dared to meddle with Charlemagne, or, having dared, would he have dreamed of success, think you? I trow not.

Nevertheless the dark Lombard had a subtle brain—his crafty schemes were not ill-laid, his enmity might have caused trouble to any lesser man than Charlemagne. Charlemagne, you must know, had a brother whose name was Carloman. In the beginning Carloman reigned over one-half of Gaul, Charlemagne over the other. The kingdom of Gaul had been equally divided between them when their father, the brave King Pepin the Little, died. And in so sharing the realm they followed the custom of Gaul at that time.

Now these two brothers never agreed well together; although, mark you, this Carloman was to blame for more than half their quarrels. He was no match for his greater brother either in generosity or wit. However, peace was kept in some sort between them chiefly by the help of the wise Queen Bertrada, their mother. This often troubled and uneasy peace they kept until Carloman died, leaving a widow to weep for him with two, and maybe three, little children.

Thus the whole great kingdom of Gaul came to Charlemagne, and rightfully so. The people were not at all minded to choose a little child for their king even though he were a son of Carloman. In those troublous times they needed a man to rule them, a warrior to lead them, and with one consent they chose Charlemagne; and who shall say their choice was not just and good.

Carloman's widow, Giberga, thought differently, however. She coveted the throne for her little son. In the way of all mothers she longed to give him a great inheritance; so knowing of the hatred Desiderius bore for Charlemagne, she fled to the Lombardy court with her children, pleading for shelter and safety. Let it be understood, however, that Giberga had no need to flee from her brother-in-law. Both she and her children were safe in his hands. He had no least thought of harming them.

You will believe me when I tell you that Desiderius welcomed the distressed widow with much joy. He consoled her with many promises of aid. "You shall dwell in peace and safety here," he assured her, "until that time when I can help you win back your son's kingdom again. Charlemagne has already done injustice enough to make me ever eager to help those whom he has injured."

Now this Desiderius said because of the hate he bore Charlemagne, and indeed he had some cause for offence. Charlemagne had slighted him more than once in a way which the fiery Lombard was least likely to forgive; besides there had been ill-feeling between Lombardy and Gaul for some

little time. Desiderius had waited long for a chance to pay back some of the ancient grudges he held against Charlemagne. Charlemagne, on the other hand, thought very little about them, and feared Desiderius not at all.

But now it seemed to the King of the Lombards as if his opportunity had come at last. Giberga's appeal for shelter and help had made him think of a new plan for revenge, and he set to work on it as quickly as might be.

If you think he instantly declared himself the champion of Carloman's son by making war upon Charlemagne straight away, you cannot have understood the wily nature of the man.

Desiderius aimed his first blow at Hadrian, the Pope of Rome, Charlemagne's great friend.

He sent messengers to Hadrian bidding him anoint Carloman's son king of his father's realm, at the same time threatening to make instant war upon the Church should the Pope refuse.

Mark you here the cunning of this! If Hadrian out of fear should anoint the little Prince with holy oil, Desiderius hoped to win many brave knights to give up their allegiance to Charlemagne and fight for the son of Carloman. For to be anointed by holy oil and declared by the Pope of Rome to be the true heir of Carloman's kingdom would count for a great deal with these knights who had once served Carloman himself.

On the other hand, should Hadrian refuse, Desiderius would have that excuse for making war upon Rome, and this he was longing to do. It would annoy Charlemagne, besides pay off some old grudges that he held against Hadrian.

So then Desiderius felt that whether Hadrian's answer was a "yea" or a "nay" he had the best of it. Hadrian, as you must guess, refused point blank. He who had already anointed and blessed the great Charlemagne, who had named him the friend and defender of the Church, was not going to bring

trouble and division into Gaul, no matter what the Lombard threatened.

Upon this Desiderius marched forth with a great army, captured many of the cities belonging to the Church, and laid siege to Rome itself.



SHE FLED TO THE LOMBARDY COURT WITH HER CHILDREN, PLEADING FOR SHELTER AND SAFETY.

The Romans were terror-struck. The fighting blood in them was still asleep, and they knew their beloved city was in no fit state to withstand assault. They rushed to Hadrian begging him to surrender at once and do the Lombard's will.

"Talk no such coward's stuff to me," cried the old Pope stoutly. "Go, build up new gates and strong forts and prepare yourselves for battle. God will not forsake us when our cause is good. The Lombard's ways are evil; he cannot succeed."

"We cannot hold out for long," cried one.

"We can hold out just so long as we have faith in God and King Charlemagne," answered the undaunted Hadrian. "He will never desert us, nor let us perish for his sake." "King Charlemagne cannot know of our peril," cried another old councillor. "And if he knew, how could he help? He is in the far, far north conquering the fierce Saxons."

There was a silence. At last Pope Hadrian cried, "We will send word to him of our plight, and meanwhile we will prepare to withstand the siege."

"He who takes the word will have to brave the dangers of the sea," said the old councillor, "and God knows what they are. Desiderius has guarded every pass through the mountains into Gaul."

At this all looked grave again, for in those days, when the ships were badly built and sailors scarce, a voyage by sea was no small undertaking.

One brave man, however, was found willing to thus hazard his life. He was a monk, and his name was Peter. He crossed to Marseilles, and after a long and adventurous journey through Gaul he came upon Charlemagne at last in the far north. The King and all his court were resting from the labours of war, for it was winter-time—the time of peace.

Peter, I trow, never forgot his first sight of the hero-king seated at meat amidst the throng of wise and learned men whom he kept ever near him, for Charlemagne was not only a

great warrior but a great scholar, a maker of laws, and a lover of learning. Peter knew him at once for the King, albeit he was clad more simply than many of his nobles. Surely it was an easy matter to distinguish him from the others. Was he not taller and stronger than them all? Was it not said that he was so hardy that he could hunt the wild boar single-handed and alone; so strong that he could fell a horse and its rider at one blow of his fist, or straighten four horse-shoes joined together, or lift with his right hand a man in full war-dress?

If these things were known of him, how then should Peter have failed to know him? Besides, Charlemagne looked the great King that he was. His forehead was majestic, his nose like an eagle's beak. He had eyes like a lion, and were he angry no man dare look him in the face, so fiercely did those great eyes shine. Peter beheld them flash and burn fiercely for a second when the King looked up from the reading of Hadrian's letter, and he took great comfort from their anger, knowing then that the Pope had not trusted his friend in vain.

But for a while it seemed as if King Charlemagne cared not over much about the matter; it seemed as if he were more anxious to conquer the Saxons than to make new war on Lombardy.

He sent, however, comfortable words of cheer and encouragement to Hadrian, together with promises of speedy help. Also he despatched messengers to Desiderius bidding him come to terms of peace. His first envoy was received with courtesy and respect by the Lombards, the second with scorn and contumely, and when the third arrived offering Desiderius gold if he would surrender the cities he had captured belonging to the Church, the dark king laughed aloud in triumph.

"The great Charlemagne is in no hurry to face me and my army," he boasted. "Doubtless he knows that every easy mountain path into Italy is guarded by my soldiers, while as for the two that are open he dared not bring his army through

either of them. He would perish by the way, and he knows it. "Twould be an impossible task."

"Nothing is impossible for Charlemagne," said Ogier the Dane, who knew Charlemagne, having served under him, then after offending him beyond pardon had fled to the court of Lombardy. "Nothing is impossible for Charlemagne," Ogier repeated warningly.

But Desiderius laughed and returned a scornful message to the Franks.

Charlemagne by this time had moved southward and was holding a Champ-de-Mai. This was a gathering together of the people by the King to decide whether there should be peace or war.

Upon receiving the word of Desiderius, war was instantly declared; every Frank who could fight hurried to join the great army, bringing with him his weapons, horses, and what food he could carry. There was need for haste. Hadrian, in spite of his brave resistance, could not hold out much longer. Desiderius, triumphing already, awaited another message from Charlemagne.

It came. It was brought by a frightened peasant from the hill-country riding in desperate haste. Desiderius heard with some dismay that Charlemagne had led a great army across the terrible, the impossible mountain pass, marching along ways where no man with an army behind him had marched since the time of Hannibal the Carthaginian.

Presently more tidings came. Charlemagne's uncle, the Duke Bernard, had led another great army over the other dangerous and unguarded pass. These two armies would, of course, join each other so soon as they were safely out of the hills. Desiderius in all haste marched his army northwards, hoping to catch the enemy at a disadvantage while they were yet passing through the narrow defiles of the hills.

But he was too late, and the Lombard judged it more prudent to retire to Pavia, the capital of Lombardy.

In this he did wisely. Pavia was a strong city, well provisioned and almost invulnerable. Desiderius had little fear of its capture, yet for safety's sake he sent his son, and the widow Giberga with her children, to another of his strong cities. Then disdainful, sure of his power to withstand a long siege, Desiderius awaited his enemy.

Charlemagne did not tarry. When word came of his coming, Desiderius, together with Ogier the Dane, climbed a high tower so better to catch the first glimpse of his approach. Presently in the distance, yet coming ever nearer, they saw a great army of soldiers who bore with them many formidable machines of war.

"Is Charlemagne among these soldiers?" asked Desiderius.

To which Ogier, who remembered the army of old, answered—"No, the King is not there."

Next came horde after horde of wild foreign soldiers, brought from every part of Charlemagne's vast domain.

"Surely Charlemagne walks triumphant among this great host," said Desiderius.

"No," answered Ogier, "he comes not yet."

On this Desiderius began to look dismayed. "How will he come, if not amongst his soldiers?" he asked.

"You will not mistake him when he does come," replied Ogier; "and may God have mercy upon us."

Even while he spoke there appeared a huge regiment of guards. "Verily he must be among these," cried Desiderius, and his voice trembled, but so slightly that you could not notice it.

"No," answered Ogier, "he comes not yet."

Lo, now they beheld an almost endless procession of bishops and priests and clerks of the Chapel Royal, and after them marched the great nobles and counts. At sight of these Desiderius grew pale.



DESIDERIUS, TOGETHER WITH OGIER THE DANE, CLIMBED A HIGH TOWER SO BETTER TO CATCH THE FIRST GLIMPSE OF HIS APPROACH.

"Behold the terrible King!" cried he.

"Not yet," answered Ogier "When you see the grass in the meadows shake with fear, when you behold the rivers turn into iron and overflow and beat against the walls of the city with their iron waves, then you may believe that Charlemagne is here."

As he spoke, toward the region of the setting sun there appeared a sombre cloud which seemed verily to block out the light of the day with its terrible shadow. As it approached, a fearful sound was heard like the noise of thunder on a dark night. It was the clatter of armed men.

Then came Charlemagne riding upon his huge war-horse. He wore on his head an iron helmet; on his hands were iron gauntlets. His breastplate and cuirass were of strong iron and also his shield. He held an iron lance in his left hand, while always his right hand rested on his invincible sword. His horse had the strength and the colour of iron.

All the soldiers who went before the monarch, all those who marched at his sides, all those who followed him, were clothed in iron armour. To Desiderius it was as if iron covered the plains and the roads; the very rays of the sun seemed tipped with it.

The folk, watching from the walls of the threatened city, beheld the sight with terror. "Alas! alas!" they cried, "we are lost!"

The sound of their crying rose to torment the ears of their King. "Behold Charlemagne," said Ogier at last, and he too looked pale. Desiderius bowed his head. He was dismayed; nevertheless, he determined to hold out to the last. The great army made its camp round about the city—making ready for a long stay. Charlemagne ordered them to build him a lovely chapel so he might worship there undisturbed. He meant to show both his strength and his mercy. He would neither attack nor slaughter, nor would he leave Pavia until the city was his.

For many months he waited there, holding the siege. Nevertheless he sent parts of his army to rescue the cities

Desiderius had taken. He even journeyed to Rome with all his train of bishops to pay a state visit to Hadrian; and the Romans hailed him with great joy as their Emperor. Then the hero, after having given back to the Church all those cities which Desiderius had taken away from it, returned to his army still besieging Pavia.

And now was that city harder beset than ever. The citizens by this time were starving, and so strict a watch did Charlemagne keep that no living thing nor any morsel of food could pass the gates. Only the birds of the air were free to enter. Then the Pavians saw that they must perish with hunger if they resisted a day longer, so they surrendered. They gave up the keys of their city to Charlemagne; they gave up their King; then they waited, trusting in their conqueror's kindness of heart.

Charlemagne did not betray that trust. No citizen of Pavia was slaughtered or molested in any way. Desiderius was sent to a monastery where he could do no more harm, and where he seems to have been not unhappy, while Charlemagne wore on his head the iron crown of the Kings of Lombardy.

As was his wont, he ruled his new subjects well and wisely, so that they loved him and were loyal to him as to one of their own race.

Now this is only one of a thousand tales that might be told in praise of the great Charlemagne who made of his conquests one vast empire, over which he ruled gloriously for many long years. He, too, and much more splendidly than Clovis, had made of Gaul a united and glorious kingdom. Yet after his death it became divided, shorn of half its possessions, and at last came to be known as the kingdom of the Franks—that is to say, France.

CHAPTER III

A STORY IN PRAISE OF ST. LOUIS THE NINTH, KING OF FRANCE

Taken for the most part from the Chronicles of the Sieur John of Joinville, his Seneschal.

In the name of the all-powerful God, the good King Louis was born on the feast-day of St. Mark, the twenty-fifth day of April, in the year 1215.

He was crowned in his twelfth year on the first Sunday in Advent, when the Mass begins thus: "Good God, I have raised my heart and soul toward Thee; I put my trust in Thee!"

It was needful that God should help the good King in his youth, for his mother, Queen Blanche of Castile, was a Spanish woman and a foreigner. And at first, the barons of France took but little heed either of her or of little Louis. Instead, they made the King's great-uncle, the Count of Boulogne, their leader, and obeyed him as their true lord.

It happened at the coronation of the little King that the barons, by way of beginning their rebellion, commanded Blanche, the Queen-Dowager, to deliver up to them all the lands that belonged to the Crown of France.

She refused to obey so unjust a demand. These noblemen, then consulting together, agreed to set the Count of Brittany against the king. When, therefore, this same Count of Brittany began to make war on the domain of Louis, the nobles (having privily decided on their actions) brought no more than two knights each with them to battle in defence of King Louis. By this means they hoped to give the victory to the King's enemy.

But their treacherous plan failed, for by God's will the loyal Count of Thibaut was moved to bring out all his forces—a goodly number of gallant knights, who did such marvellous deeds in the King's defence that the Count of Brittany was forced to retreat in discomfiture. Afterwards he surrendered himself to the mercy of the King, who graciously pardoned him.

Thenceforward Louis travelled through his kingdom in security. The Queen Blanche ordered all matters pertaining to the education of her son, showing such care and wisdom in her task, that when the Prince came to his full manhood he was right well prepared for his royal duties.

Indeed, no King of France can ever equal him in sobriety, justice, and mercy. He was beloved of all his subjects from the greatest noble even to the most wretched serf.

In good sooth, he was adored and worshipped as a saint by the beggars and the sick folks, for these he cherished above all others, giving alms and administering to their wants every day of his life.

And not only was he the gentlest and the sweetest-mannered King that sat on the throne, but he was a brave and valiant soldier. This he quickly proved when the Count de la Marche and the King of England joined together to make war on France. He attacked them and forced them to such disadvantages that they were glad to retire. The King of England returned discomfited to Saxony whence he had come, while the Count de la Marche surrendered his person to King Louis, together with his wife, his children, and his lands, and a great sum of money.

Some little while after this victory, St. Louis fell grievously sick. So ill was he that all those who loved him feared he would die. Crowds of people stood outside the palace waiting to hear how he fared. Great processions walked the streets on their way to the churches where they prayed for his speedy recovery. The richest nobles, the poorest beggars,

knelt there side by side, eager to show their love and their sorrow.

Despite their prayers, the King grew worse. Believing death to be near, he bade farewell to all his household and to his family; then he swooned. One of the ladies who watched by the bedside, began to cover up the King's face, believing him dead; but another, staying her hand, cried: "No! no! Not yet! The King still lives!"

But many thought him dead. The palace was filled with the noise of weeping and lamentation. The terrible news spread. The people left their homes to throng the churches, weeping and praying. In the palace, the King's mother, his brothers, and Queen Margaret, his fair wife, still hoped.

While they knelt about his bed praying silently, of a sudden the King stirred and began to sigh. Afterwards he stretched out his arms and legs, and spoke, but in so dull and hollow a voice that they who heard him trembled. It sounded like the voice of one newly returned from the grave.

"The grace of God hath visited me from on high and reached me from the dead," said King Louis. Then, when he had quite come to himself, he commanded that the Bishop of Paris should be brought before him.

When the Bishop and another priest stood beside the bed, the King said: "My Lord Bishop, I beg you to place the cross of foreign pilgrimages upon my shoulders."

"Sire and master, bethink you what you do," cried the Bishop in distress. "Methinks 'tis more needful to keep peace in your own kingdom than it is to make war on another."

"O my dear lord, have a care," cried Queen Margaret, holding fast to the King's hand. "Put not thy sacred person in such dire peril for our love's dear sake."

"Sweet son, wait, I pray thee, until thy sickness is altogether healed before pledging thy word," the Queen Mother said.

"Not a morsel of bread, not a drop of wine shall pass my lips until you have given me the cross," Louis repeated over and over again, and with such unusual anger and force that at last the good Bishop, in much sorrow, obeyed his sire and master.

When it was known over the land that Louis had taken the cross, many more sorrowed for the King, weeping bitterly, as if he were already dead.

But Louis ever rejoiced. "Now am I healed of my grievous sickness" said he, and taking the cross, kissed it and laid it on his heart.

By causing the cross of foreign pilgrimages to be put on his shoulder, Louis had pledged himself to go and fight the Infidels in the Holy Land.

For a hundred and fifty years the fierce Turks and Saracens had inhabited Palestine and all the Blessed Country where our Lord Jesus Christ had lived when upon this earth, and no pious pilgrim, no good Christian, could visit the holy shrines for fear of these cruel unbelievers. There came a time when the Pope called on all those who loved to fight in a good cause to join together to free Jerusalem from the Infidels.

Priests, monks, soldiers, knights, princes and kings gathered together from all parts of Europe at his word, and thus began the first Crusade.

There had been six Crusades in all before Louis IX. bound the Holy Cross on his arm, and still Palestine and the surrounding country was in the hands of the Saracens. The Infidels had even begun to threaten Europe, swarming over the frontier of Germany. This made Louis uneasy lest France too should be in danger, and most likely this thought helped to keep his purpose firm.

Yet four years passed before he was ready to start for the Crusades. When he went, he left his kingdom safe under the wise rule of the Queen Mother, Blanche of Castile. Queen

Margaret went with him, also his three brothers and their wives, besides nearly all the great nobles and barons of France.



KING LOUIS STARTED FOR THE CRUSADES

Before going, the good King caused a proclamation to be made, in which he asked all the people who had been unjustly dealt with in any way to come forth and declare their wrongs, so they might have redress.

In these days, much of the land belonged to the Crown—that is, to the King. The King would divide these great estates among his high nobles and counts, and they in return paid him homage and fought for him in battle.

The nobles and counts then divided up triumphed. The town of Damietta was captured, and there Queen Margaret, her ladies, and her guard took up their abode, while the King and his great army marched towards Cairo, the capital of Egypt.

But the way up the Delta of the Nile, threaded by the many branches and canals of the great river, was a difficult way for an army to go. The march was slow. Bridges and dams had to be built and fords discovered by which to cross the rivers, and before the Christians could reach Cairo the town of Mansourah must be won.

It was on the twenty-first of December that the army came before the high-sided, deep-watered canal, which formed a triangle with the Nile. Over across the canal the Saracens were encamped.

The Crusaders busied themselves in making a causeway over which they might march to fight the Saracens; but the cunning Saracens never ceased attacking them from their high towers. King Louis saw at last that it would be well-nigh impossible to finish the causeway, for whatever work the Crusaders did was speedily ruined by the Saracens. Therefore he called his barons to consider what should be done.

Sir Hubert Beaujours, Constable of France, then addressing the King, said: "Sire, a Bedouin has lately come to say that if we will give him five hundred gold besants he will show a safe ford, which may be easily crossed on horseback."

"I will cheerfully give him the money if he speak truth," cried the King.

It was then determined that Louis, with his three brothers, the Counts of Poitiers, Artois, and Anjou, should lead the men over the ford, and this they did on Shrove Tuesday.

The Saracens, seeing the gallant company advancing on them, fled in terror, but the moment the Count D'Artois had crossed the ford and saw the Saracens fleeing, he stuck spurs to his horse and galloped after them. So also did the Knights Templars; and they followed the enemy into the city of Mansourah, and there, alas! the King's brother, for his rashness, was slain, and three hundred of his knights with him.

This caused much confusion among the French, yet was King Louis himself not dismayed. He came with all his attendants and a terrible noise of trumpets and clarions and horns. Never was there seen so noble a knight, for he seemed to tower among his fellows, taller by head and shoulders, a gilded helmet on his head, a great sword in his hand. I would have you know that in this engagement were performed on both sides gallant deeds that were ever done, for none made use of the bow, crossbow, or other artillery. The battle consisted of blows given by battle-axes, swords, and butts of spears all mingled together.

It was also said that, but for King Louis, the French would have altogether lost the day; for six Turks seized his horse's rein in order to take him prisoner, and he was delivered by himself alone; and when the Christian soldiers, who had been weakening, saw how the King defended himself, they took courage; some of them ceased to cross the stream and came to the King's aid.

By night, the Christian army occupied the Saracen camp. Nevertheless this victory failed to discourage the Infidels, who attacked the French again that same week. They were beaten back, but at the cost of such loss of life among the Christians that henceforward Louis kept his army on the defensive; and not only did the King lose men in battle, but by sickness also and starvation. St. Louis himself fell sick, and it was not long before he had to retreat across the canal again.

Matters grew worse and worse; men died by hundreds of the fever, and thousands were too weak to walk; it was pitiful to hear their cries of pain. The good King Louis then

saw that he could not remain where he was without perishing, and he gave the order to retire, commanding the masters of the galleys to have their ships ready to receive the sick on board and carry them to Damietta. Likewise the engineers were ordered to cut the ropes which held the bridges between his army and the Saracens; but this they neglected to do, which was the cause of much evil.

When the army at last set forth on their march, King Louis rode with the rearguard. He was mounted on a small Arab horse with only a housing of silk on him, he being too weak to bear armour; and of all his men-at-arms one only rode with him, a good knight, Sir Geoffroy by name.

Now, when they reached a certain village, King Louis found himself too weak to proceed further. Moreover, the Saracens, having crossed the uncut bridges, attacked and harassed the Christians at each step of the way. Sir Geoffroy, fearing the King was sick unto death, gave him into the care of a woman who happened to be there.

Presently, up came Sir Philip de Montfort, who offered to go to the Sultan to make treaty with him. King Louis bade him god-speed, and all would have been well, for Sir Philip was about to make honourable terms with the Sultan when a stupid and treacherous sergeant set up a loud shout among the French, crying: "Sir Knights, surrender yourselves! The King orders you through me to do so, and not cause yourselves to be slain." At these words all were thunderstruck, but thinking the King had indeed sent such orders, they gave up their arms and staves to the Saracens.

The Commander of the Sultan's army beholding this, said at once that he could not agree to make truce with an army which had already been made prisoner; and now our gracious King was captured by the Saracens, and many nobles and knights with him.

There was much talk among the rich Christians about the money which they were willing to pay for the release of

their friends; but the King, when he heard it, commanded that no one should pay a single piece of gold in ransom for any of his army. He feared that only the nobles with rich friends would be rescued, while the poor, common folk might be left to their fate and be prisoners among the Infidels for ever.

The Saracens, having threatened the King with torture because he would not give what they asked, now demanded of him how much money he was willing to pay for his own ransom and that of his army. King Louis answered that he would willingly pay five hundred thousand pounds for the deliverance of his army, and he would surrender to them the town of Damietta for the deliverance of his person, since he was not such an one as ought to be ransomed with money.

After a long delay, the Saracens consented, the money was paid, Damietta delivered to the Infidels, and the King, with his army, was free to return to France again if he would. But the good King was not willing to give up all hope of ever conquering the Saracens, and winning the Holy Land from them at last.

He sent back one of his brothers with many other noble knights to France, in order that they should return bringing him more money and soldiers. While awaiting them, Louis betook himself to Acre, where he worked hard to rescue all the French soldiers whom the Saracens, breaking the treaty, had treacherously refused to set free.

Thus for four long years he waited, hoping from month to month to be able to begin another campaign against the Saracens. But neither soldiers nor money came to him from France; and no chance did he ever have given him. Moreover, the wise Queen Blanche, his mother, the Queen-Regent, died, so King Louis had to set sail again for France, where he was much needed.

He reigned over his kingdom many a good year afterward until twenty-two years had passed. Then he set forth

upon a second Crusade, but hardly had the attempt begun when this most worshipful King fell sick and died.

After his death he was made a saint, and his name written in the Calendar of the Holy Church, while his body was buried with much honour in a beautiful church in Paris, which is called the Saint Chapelle, and which he himself had caused to be built; and there his tomb may be seen even unto this day.

CHAPTER IV

A STORY IN PRAISE OF JEANNE D'ARC, THE MAID OF ORLEANS

Most of which is taken from the Ancient Chronicles written down at her trial and Afterwards.

This right marvellous and true tale begins in the year of Our Lord 1424, when Jeanne was but thirteen years old.

A fine, tall maid was she, strong and shapely in body, fair of face, sweet and gentle in manner, but of a keen wit and humour withal. She lived in the little village of Domremy, which stood then outside the fair Kingdom of France, close on the borders of the Duchy of Burgundy.

The good folks of Domremy, however, were all for France. They hated and despised the Burgundians because the Burgundians sided with the English against France, and every one knows how at that time the French feared and hated the English more than any in the world.

And they had good cause for their fear, I warrant you. For many a black year the English army had wandered over France, fighting capturing, and pillaging wherever they went, and never losing a battle. So that at last the French had lost courage. It seemed to them that, however well they fought, the English had the best of it.

Besides, the French had no real, true crowned King of their own to lead them. Some years before Jeanne was born, an English King had married a French Princess. Some of the French nobles had foolishly promised that if a son should be born of the marriage, he should inherit the throne of France. No in this they did great wrong, sinning in loyalty against Charles the Dauphin, son of their dead King.

He, the true heir to the throne, must therefore wonder from town to town through France with a few courtiers, fleeing the English or fighting them, as best seemed fit; and not only was he in danger from the English who had vowed to conquer France, but also from the Burgundians, who were their allies.

Moreover, this poor prince had scarce money enough to pay his boot-maker, and, worse trouble than all, there were many even among his own Court who doubted if he were in truth the real son of the King. Even his own mother, who sided with the Burgundians, would speak no word in his favour, so that Charles, doubtful himself and very miserable, sometimes wondered if he had not better give up all hope and flee to Spain, leaving France in the hands of the English.

One day he went apart by himself and sorrowfully prayed to God in his heart (speaking no word of the prayer aloud, mark you), to let him know by some clear sign whether he had a royal right to the throne of France or whether he had none.

And now, hear ye awhile of the Blessed Maid who was to save France from the hands of her enemies. As has already been made known to you, the story begins in her thirteenth year, when she first heard the commands of God spoken through the voice of the Archangel Michael.

It happened in summer, while she walked in her father's garden. It was noontide and very warm. As she walked, Jeanne thought of many things—of the race she had won running with her comrades that day, of the poor soldier who had come back from the war sore wounded and sorrowful. Jeanne, little maid as she was, felt a great pity in her heart for the fair land of France. She longed to do something to help. On a sudden, before her, upon the right side, between her and the church, she saw a bright and radiant light, which dazzled her eyes so they were blinded for a space. Presently when she had become more used to the light and dared to look again, she saw an angel's face appearing through

the wondershine, and heard a voice which said: "Jeanne, the Lord God hath chosen thee to save France."

"Alas!" cried the maid, "how may I save our beautiful France who am but a poor village girl who tends sheep? How can such as I lead forth soldiers to war?"

"Be a good girl," said the angel; and again, "Be a good girl, little Jeanne," and then he went away.

Now you may believe this or not as you will, every one hath a right to his own opinion; nevertheless this story is true. Strange, marvellous as it may appear, Jeanne's word has been proved true a hundred times over, despite all her enemies could do; and this that I have told you is almost word for word what she told her cruel judges about the first coming of the angels.

Jeanne wept when the light vanished and she heard the voice no more. But after that she tried harder than ever to be good. And the light came again and other angels, St. Catherine and St. Margaret, whom she loved above all the saints. Sometimes she saw them and touched them, but more often she heard them speak, and ever the words they spoke were to the same end. "Jeanne, be good, and thou shalt save France."

To herself Jeanne called them "My Voices," or "My Counsel," but to her father and friends in Domremy she breathed never a word of what had happened her until later.

Meanwhile matters grew worse in France, and when Jeanne was scarcely seventeen years old the voices became more urgent. They began to tell her what to do. "Go into France, Jeanne," they said; "it is time."

And one day they told her that she must rescue the town of Orleans, for it was in great danger. Orleans was the only town in France which remained true to the Dauphin; if the Dauphin lost it, he lost all France with it.

Then the voices told Jeanne how she was to reach Orleans, and she obeyed them in all things. This is what she

did. She left her father and her mother and her home—remember it was by God's command that she went, and He gave her strength and courage to do it. She left Domremy and journeyed to Vaucouleurs, a strong embattled town loyal to France and not far from Domremy.



SHE SAW AN ANGEL'S FACE APPEARING THROUGH THE WONDER-SHINE

There she went straight to Robert de Baudricourt, the captain of the town, and told her story, how by the command

of God she was come to save France. Baudricourt, as you may believe, laughed at her, refusing to believe a word she said.

"A foolish, dreaming girl," he said; "turn her away."

But she came again to him, saying earnestly, "To-day the gentle Dauphin hath great hurt from the town of Orleans, and yet greater will he have if you do not send me to him."

Now, the day on which Jeanne told the captain this was the twelfth of February, she being informed by her voices; and on the twelfth of February the Dauphin was defeated with great loss by the English at the battle of Rouvray.

A few days later, for tidings came but slowly in olden times, news was brought to Baudricourt of the battle and of the Dauphin's loss. Baudricourt, remembering Jeanne's words, and wondering greatly, began to believe in this strange maid and her high mission. He told her he was ready to do what she asked of him.

Obedying the voices, she begged for a grey doublet, black hose, and horse, and an escort. So, clad like a boy, riding upon a great horse and accompanied by a knight, a squire, and four men-at-arms, Jeanne set out for Chinon, where the Dauphin then was.

They rode far and fast and at last came to Chinon, where Jeanne was lodged with a kindly dame who took good care of her. Already word of her coming and of her strange daring and confidence had gone forth over the land. Yet most men scoffed, crying: "How shall a slight girl stand up against these terrible English?"

On the second day after Jeanne's coming to Chinon, the Prince received her in spite of all his courtiers could say to prevent him. These nobles of his court were afraid lest the girl might unsettle the Prince and so disturb their pleasure. Not one believed there was a word of truth in her story.

When the maid was brought into the hall of the castle where the King had his court, she beheld a crowd of gallant-

looking men, and women clad in rich and splendid dress. Before she came in, the Dauphin had given his mantle to a courtier in exchange for a simple cloak, and he stood among his nobles as one of them.

Every one expected the maid to fall on her knees before the courtier, who wore the King's gorgeous mantle. Jeanne did no such thing. Paying no heed to any one, nay, looking at no one but the true Dauphin, she went straight to him and, kneeling, said:

"This is the fair Prince to whom I am sent."

"Nay, I am not the Dauphin," answered the Prince, wishing to try her further.

"If you are not he," answered Jeanne, "then my voices have betrayed me, and that could not be. My voices have shown me that you are the Prince whose kingdom I must save, and whom I shall crown at Rheims before the year be out."

"Ah me, if that might be!" Charles said wistfully.

"It shall be," answered the maid. "Give me an audience alone for a few moments, gentle Dauphin, and you shall believe me."

Wondering at this strange girl, the Dauphin later spoke with her alone, and what she told him he told a friend long afterwards, when he was old. Jeanne herself would never tell what passed between them, not even when they tortured her on her trial. It was the Dauphin's secret, and she kept it faithfully.

We, who have read what the Dauphin said, know that Jeanne told him that God had answered his secret, silent prayer, and sent her to assure him that he was the true and rightful heir to the throne of France, the eldest son of the dead King, the prince whom she had been sent to crown.

What could Charles do but believe this holy, heaven-sent maid? Nevertheless, to make quite sure, he sent her to Poitiers, there to be questioned and examined by wise bishops

and priests. These clever men did their best to find out all about Jeanne. They questioned and they questioned, and not one single false word could they accuse the maid of having spoken. Her answers were often so simple, so witty, so wise, that they marvelled daily. All their questioning and Jeanne's answers were written down in a book, and they can be read unto this day.

In six weeks they sent Jeanne back to the King, and this was their judgment: "The maid is good and true. Believe in her."

After this, Charles began to do more what Jeanne told him to do. He set about gathering together an army for her; he had white armour made for her (for she always wore the dress of a boy until the day of her death), and a shield and a banner.

When he would have given her a sword, she refused, bidding them send to a certain chapel named after St. Catherine, in which she said the sword lay buried which was for her use. When they obeyed her, sure enough, they found an old rusty sword there, with five crosses upon it. This she wore always, but used rarely even in battle, so gentle was she, so much did she dislike to take away life.

The French soldiers were all very eager to follow this new and strange girl-captain. She roused all the courage there was in them, for they believed that she and she only could lead them triumphantly against the English. But although the whole army loved her, and she it, Jeanne was a very strict, stern captain. She would allow no feasting, no drinking, no swearing, even among her generals.

When the soldiers were all ready, Jeanne, obeying her voices, led them straight to Orleans, which was by this time in very great danger from the English.

On the 29th of April 1422, the French army had passed the enemy's lines and entered Orleans. Perhaps dates of battles are not very interesting things to you, but mark you this, if you would understand something of the glory of the maid. As a

general no one could match her, and as for her skill in using cannon, no one could surpass it.

The French reached Orleans on the 29th of April, upon a Friday. Upon the Wednesday afterwards, that is, upon the 4th of May, Jeanne led out her men and took one of the English forts called St. Loup.

Upon the second day after that she took the fort of St. Augustine, and on the next Sunday she fought again, and so fiercely, that the English retired in dismay. Orleans, after its long siege, was saved.

The English were not only vexed at being defeated, but they were sore ashamed that the victory had been won by a woman. "She must be a witch," the soldiers said; and at the thought of fighting a witch the courage of even the bravest of them failed.

It had been easy for them to fight the French before this, because the French had been so often defeated that they did not fight well; but now with their beloved maid to lead them in her shining armour, they were foes of very different metal.

Orleans now safe, Jeanne wanted to take the Dauphin to Rheims and crown him. As you very likely know, no King of France was thought to be a real king until he had been crowned at Rheims and anointed with the Holy Oil that was kept there for that purpose.

But to reach Rheims many towns had to be recaptured from the English, and the Dauphin was not over anxious to go. Now from the beginning the voices had warned Jeanne that she had only a year's time in which to do all that she had to do; and that year dated from May 1429. This she told the Dauphin over and over again, hoping to rouse him to come with her to Rheims.

But the Dauphin was surrounded by lazy courtiers who did not want to move, being very comfortable where they

were, and all the Dauphin did was to summon Council after Council to consider what should be done. Jeanne grew tired of waiting.

"I have four things to do," she said. "To drive the English in flight from our country, to deliver the Duke of Orleans who is their prisoner, to crown the King at Rheims, and to raise the siege of Orleans. This last is done. Now must we fight our way to Rheims."

The Dauphin had made her waste one month of her precious year. So she set out without him and defeated the famous English general, Talbot, at Pathay, on an open battlefield. Even then it was hard to make the Dauphin move; even though Jeanne told him that all the cities, instead of fighting, would open their gates to him.

When at last he did begin the march, Charles found the Maid's words were true. With little or no trouble he came to Rheims, to the great joy of all France.

On the 17th of July, Jeanne with a great and fair company of noble knights brought the King along the streets of Rheims to the beautiful Cathedral. He entered with much pomp and splendour to the sound of singing, and then with much rejoicing the Archbishop anointed and crowned the Dauphin King of France.

Jeanne, as she knelt to do the King homage and swear the oath of fealty, wept for very joy. Two of her high tasks were done. Soon she would perform the rest and be free at last to go back to her own little village and see her father and mother again. That was what she longed to do more than anything else in the world, but first her duty must be done.

King Charles now asked her what reward he could give her, to which she answered: "Fair King, I would that the people of my village should be freed from the paying of taxes for three hundred years"; and the King said, "So it shall be," and he caused to be written on the books of the accounts of the

villages after the name of Domremy and of the village next to it:

"Nothing, for the sake of the Maid."

As they rode from the Cathedral, the Archbishop asked Jeanne if she feared anything.

"Nought but treachery," she answered.

Alas and alas! how shall I tell of the treachery that worked against her ever after that glorious day at Rheims?

Unwitting of it, she rode to Paris, which was in the hands of the Burgundians, the allies of the English.

"We must take Paris," quoth she, "and when Paris is ours, all France will be ours, and I shall go home to Domremy and be happy again." Jeanne's words would have come true had she been allowed her own way, but she was not.

The weak Dauphin let his lazy favourites persuade him to do as they wanted, so that instead of hurrying to help the Maid lay siege to Paris, he loitered with his army at this town or that on the way, and when he at last came to Paris, it was too late, for the English had brought up an army to help their allies.

Jeanne, meanwhile, had been attacking the walls bravely and had done good work. Every day she led out her men, and from dawn to night-time they fought in the trenches. It was wonderful to hear the noise of the guns and culverins from the walls.

When Charles with his soldiers at last showed themselves, the Maid was full confident they could storm the city. But she relied on the King's army to help, and again the King failed her, for hearing that she was wounded, he sent word of command to her to stop the fighting.

Very, very reluctantly, and sad at heart, she obeyed. The next day, however, she and her friend, the Duke of Alençon, who has told us many of her doings, made ready

again to fight, for Jeanne's wound was slight. Again came word from the King forbidding them to begin. More than that, he ordered a bridge to be destroyed which Jeanne had caused to be built, so that she could cross the river Seine the very next day and attack Paris from another quarter.

You can picture to yourself how disappointed Jeanne and her eager soldiers were; their plans spoilt, their hopes of victory crushed by this timid King, whose word they must obey. And worse was to come; for Charles, hoodwinked by evil counsellors and anxious for peace, would not let Jeanne fight again for six long months.

The Maid's heart nigh broke, and all her generals and soldiers mourned with her. So they waited while the foolish King tried to make peace with the Duke of Burgundy, who was only the Governor of Paris because the English wanted him to be.

So the year 1429, which might have meant so much more to France had the Maid been let alone to do as she willed, passed away, and the next year, 1430, wore on to spring. You will remember that Jeanne's year finished in May 1430. The time was very near. The voices which had all the time spoken and counselled Jeanne in all that she did, now spoke to her again, but they gave her little cheer.

"It needs must be that you shall be taken prisoner before Midsummer Day," said they. "But do thou be of good cheer and God will send you help."

Jeanne's heart sank within her and she grew afraid. She prayed to God that she might die in battle rather than be taken prisoner. She knew too well that the English would tie her to a stake and burn her to death if they once could capture her; for the English firmly believed she was a witch, and it was the custom to burn witches in those days.

Nevertheless, in spite of her great fear, in spite of hearing the same dreadful words from the voices over and over again, Jeanne went out to fight when she could, as

bravely as of old; and of the many brave and noble deeds this is thought to be the bravest and the noblest thing she did, for she went out to fight in a very different way from before.

Before this, the voices had warned her of danger, had told her what to do, and had guided her to victory. Now they were silent; they let her act as she would, and they never told her the day or the hour when she was to be captured.

And so Jeanne, instead of taking the lead, took the advice of her captains and generals. It was the best she could do for she was never sure of victory, as had always been before.

One day news came that the good city of Compiègne, which was loyal to France, had been laid siege to by a great army of English and Burgundians. Jeanne, who loved that city, at once set out to its rescue, and with only a few hundred men in her company she rode into the town under cover of night.

The people received her with great joy, for wherever Jeanne went she brought hope and joy. This was on the dawn of the 23rd day of May 1430. At five o'clock in the morning she led out her men to the attack, hoping to surprise the enemy. So she did, driving them back twice; and then (alas! that this must be told) up came the main body of the enemy to help the Burgundians. They forced Jeanne to fall back towards the city. Before she and her little troop could reach the gates, up rushed the English between her and the bridge that leads into Compiègne.

The fear in Jeanne's heart grew. Bravely she spurred her horse up the raised causeway, and leaped into the meadow below. There she was at once surrounded by the Burgundians, who called her to surrender. "Never!" she cried, hoping they would kill her on the spot. But this they were not likely to do, for Jeanne was worth a large sum of money to her captors. Either King Charles would ransom her, or they could sell her to the English, who would give much to get this Maid into their hands.



IN THE MARKET-PLACE AT ROUEN THEY BURNED HER TO DEATH AT THE STAKE

And now you must hear of Jeanne's troubles even to their cruel end. This gentlest, noblest, bravest maid that ever lived in all the world was sold to the English. The King of France, whom she had crowned, made no effort to save her. The English bought her and, having done so, gave her into the hands of the French priests, who were on their side, so she might be tried by them for being a witch and a heretic, a

worker of magic, and many other horrible things, none of which were true.

She was brought to her trial at Rouen, where no mercy was ever shown to her by her enemies. The greatest of these was Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais. Some day, when you are old enough, you can read if you will the whole account of the trial, which was written down at that time, and has since been translated into English.

You will see how bravely the Maid stood up against an army of bishops, priests, and lawyers, all questioning her, all waiting to find fault with her answers and make them out to be lies. You will read how they tortured her to try and make her confess that her voices were the voices of devils, and not of angels.

They could do nothing with her. She told her story simply and truthfully, and the voices helped her many a time to out-wit her captors. Yet there came a time even when they seemed to have left her and she stood alone. Once in her darkest hour she denied having heard the voices, but very quickly she repented and never lost courage again.

Always they tormented her over the boy's dress she wore by command of the voices, and it was the wearing of the boy's dress which gave those cruel and malicious priests the excuse for Condemning her to death.

They said that she committed a sin against God by so doing, and yet would give her no chance to change, and by a cruel act of treachery they Condemned her to death. In the market-place at Rouen they burned her to death at the stake upon May the 24th, 1431. One whole year had she lain in prison for her trial, and she was only nineteen years old when she died.

They put eight hundred soldiers around the stake for fear any one should try to save her, and on her brow they set a paper cap, on which was written, "Heretic, Relapsed, Apostate, Idolatress?"

Lightly the true Maid went to her cruel death, and gladly she died, bowing her head and calling on the name of Jesus, and the English threw her ashes into the sea so men should forget her. How could they think men should forget such a Maid. The whole world owes her reverence now, for no more beautiful spirit ever lived on earth.

In the town of Orleans now every eighth of May they hold a feast in her honour, while many a town has its statue of her. Her fair name has been cleared, for some time after her death there was another trial. Every one who knew her came to testify to her truth and goodness, so that even in her own age men had some dim idea of doing justice to her memory.

As for the English after their cruel burning of Jeanne, nothing prospered with them in France. They were driven back again to England, with no least chance of ever winning again the Crown which by right belonged to the Kings of France.

CHAPTER V

A STORY IN PRAISE OF AND PITY FOR THE HUGUENOTS

Taken for the most part from the memoirs of Maximilian Bethune, Baron de Rosny, afterwards Duke of Sully and Chief Minister to Henry IV., King of Navarre.

"As this is part of the history of my own life together with that of Prince Henry of Navarre, my gracious master, it is needful that I should make known something of myself.

"Maximilian is my name, Bethune that of my family. I am of the younger branch of this famous family, and the fortunes of our house were somewhat sunken in the time of which I write, owing to the extravagance of my grandfather, who left my father nought but the estate of Rosny, his wife's dower.

"At the time of which I write, I was in my eleventh year. My parents were of the Reformed religion. In that religion I was bred, and neither threats nor promises nor chances of fortune, nor even the change of the King, my master, have ever been able to make me renounce it."

Here shall be told something of the religious wars which made France suffer so terribly and for so long a time, so you who read may understand better this story of the Baron de Rosny, as Maximilian Bethune was then called.

In the time of Rosny, and for long before it, the Roman Catholic Church was very different from what it had been in the beginning. It had become so corrupt, so many evils were done in its name, that at last some honest and brave men had refused to believe any longer what it taught. They left the Church and founded a Church and another belief for

themselves; they worshipped God in freedom and in their own way.

Luther first in Germany began this revolt against the power and authority of the Pope of Rome. Calvin followed later in Geneva. By degrees the new faith and the new desire to worship God as they liked spread over all Europe.

As you may believe, the Roman Catholics did their best to crush it. In Spain the cruel Philip II. tortured and burned thousands of the Protestants, for so these Protesters against Rome were called. In every country they were persecuted and put to death.

Nevertheless, the new religion did not die; it grew, it prospered, even until the sixteenth century, when the Protestants were strong enough to send an army against the Catholics. Thus began the religious wars, as they were named, although men fought in them for many other reasons than religion.

Now again we turn to Rosny and his story:

"Henry, King of Navarre, of the Royal House of Bourbon, was seven years older than I. He, too, was born a Protestant of the Reformed Church. His grandmother was a sister of Francois I., King of France. She married the King of Navarre. They had a daughter Jeanne, who married Antoine de Bourbon. Henry of Navarre, my master, was their son.

"Now, Henry's mother, Jeanne, who upon her father's death became Queen of Navarre, was a staunch Protestant and ever supported our side. Indeed, when the Prince of Condé, our leader, was killed after the battle of Jarnac, and when the Protestants were nigh to despair, Jeanne brought her young son to them to be their leader, thus giving our soldiers new courage, for in war young Henry was brave and prudent beyond his years, yet audacious and rash enough withal when the occasion seemed to warrant it. In the year 1570 peace was made between Protestants and Catholics, and at this time my story begins."

Let it be understood first, however, the strange fortunes of the young Prince, Rosny's master. His father died at the siege of Navarre, leaving Henry King of Navarre. Upon the throne of France sat Charles the Ninth, a weak and wicked King, ruled by his mother, the treacherous, the terrible Catherine de Medici. It was said that Catherine disliked the young Henry because he came of the House of Bourbon. The astrologers, in whom she firmly believed, had warned her that while each of her three sons should become in turn King of France they would none of them leave any children to inherit their kingdom. Hence, the next of kin, the man who would rule France at last by lawful right of heritage, would be a Bourbon.

Be this as it may, Catherine, if she hated, hid her heart from all, and when the young Prince came to Court made much of him, as you shall shortly hear.

She also kept faithful to the treaty of peace made with the Protestants in 1570. Indeed, she took many of the noble Protestant lords into her favour, gaining their confidence by fair words and deeds until it came about that they trusted her altogether. Also she made advances to Jeanne, Queen of Navarre, whose trust she could not win altogether although she gained her end. She offered her daughter, the beautiful Princess Marguerite of Valois, in marriage to the young Prince Henry. "So shall we unite," said she, "the Protestant Prince to the Catholic Princess, thus strengthening and making friendly both religions."

Jeanne was at last persuaded to consent to the match, and, leaving her kingdom, set out with her son for Paris. And here again the young Rosny takes up the tale.

"My father, hearing of the journey of the Queen of Navarre, could scarcely believe it, so sure was he that the present peace between Protestant and Catholic would not last,—for he knew the temper of Catherine's mind, and her treachery. The Queen of Navarre summoned him to meet her at Vendome. He took me with him, and in the presence of all the Court presented me to Prince Henry, in my name giving

him homage and assurance of lifelong service. While there also he warned the Queen of Navarre to beware of the fair promises of the Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, saying that he was sure that if the marriage of the young couple took place in Paris, the nuptial favours would be dyed in blood. And in this he was right, for all he said came to pass, yet none then would believe his word, thinking him weak and over-prudent.

"Then my father rode on his way home, and I went with Queen Jeanne and the young Prince to Paris. We were received very kindly by the Queen Mother and the King her son. They showed us all manner of gracious kindnesses, and continually in our hearing praised the Protestant lords who had come from all over the country to the wedding of their Prince.

"Admiral Coligny, the noblest of our cause, was treated by the King with more tenderness and affection than any of the others. Charles IX. even called him father, and took upon himself the sorry task of trying to reconcile the Guises to the Admiral. The Guises held him in deadly hatred, and declared their hate in a way not to be mistaken. For the Admiral was one day in his own lodgings stabbed by an assassin in their hire. On hearing of the 'accident,' King Charles was much perturbed. He gave the Guises cold looks and words when they came before him.

"The Queen Mother, who was surrounded by many noble and Protestant lords, saw that they whispered much one with the other, and looked on her with suspicious eyes. Her friendship with the Guises was well known, and these Protestants were beginning to believe that the attempt to murder the noble Coligny had been suggested by the Queen Mother to further her own evil purposes.

"They knew she feared Coligny was gaining too much in the affections of Charles IX., her son, whom heretofore she had ruled as she willed. Thus they guessed in some part that she planned some evil deed which should ruin the Reformed

Church, but little did they guess how great was the evil or how terrible.

"After the wedding had been celebrated, with pomp and much splendour, Queen Jeanne of Navarre was taken ill. She died very shortly afterwards, to the great grief of the noble Prince, her son; but, to my mind, it was great good fortune for her so to die before the terrible disaster which was to come should have broken her heart, for Queen Jeanne loved her religion above everything else in the world.

"Soon after King Henry of Navarre and his bride, the fair Marguerite, were safely wed, strange whisperings began to be heard about the Court—whisperings of some dark secret of the Queen Mother. Because of this many Protestant gentlemen withdrew from the city to the suburbs. They feared evil in some form, but knew not how it would come. Treachery was in the air. My father was one of those who happily preserved their lives, and when invited to come nearer to the Court, he replied that he found the air of the suburbs agreed better with his health, and that the fields were still more advantageous to it.

"Many Protestants begged the Admiral Coligny to withdraw before worse things befell him. 'Gentlemen,' he said, when they came to him, 'if I leave Paris, I show either fear or distrust. My honour will be injured if I show fear; my King will be hurt if I show distrust. I should again have to begin another civil war, and I would rather die than witness again the miseries I have already seen.'

"The Prince of Navarre, my master, was also warned to leave the Court, yet nothing would he believe against the Queen Mother or any of her friends. And so the ill-omened month passed until it came to the dawn of that fatal day, the day of the Feast of St. Bartholomew, the 24th of August 1572.

"Upon that day Catherine, the Queen Mother, the Duke of Guise, who so hated Admiral Coligny, together with five other nobles, consulted together secretly.

"Of this secret plotting I then knew nothing. I was lodged with my tutor in a little house apart from the Court, and being only a small boy knew little of what was going on around me. But so you may understand what follows, I will tell you now (and this I learned long afterwards) that the Queen Mother had been plotting against the Protestants for some time past. She saw that they could not be conquered in battle; seeing this, she made peace with them so she might have time to plot their total ruin.

"So she might tempt them all to come together at the same place and the same time she planned the marriage of young Navarre and her daughter. Having succeeded in this she meant to have Admiral Coligny assassinated, and when his friends and soldiers defended him, as she was sure they would do, she had troops of hired soldiers all in readiness to fight them to the death.

"But these fine plans all miscarried, for an unknown assassin had wounded the Admiral before the appointed time. This had raised the suspicions of the Protestants, and they were now all leaving Paris as fast as they could. And what was still worse to Catherine's crafty mind, the King, her son, had taken a sudden fancy to the Admiral Coligny. There was even a fear in her heart lest Charles the Ninth should turn Protestant. In spite of his well-known obedience to her there were times and moods when he did as he liked, whatever she said.

'Something must be done to get rid of these pests,' she said to the Duke of Guise, 'and quickly too; we must work together.'

'I am willing to do all that you ask of me,' answered the ambitious Duke. 'I desire above all things the death of Admiral Coligny.'

'He shall die at any rate,' said Catherine coldly. 'I have a plan, but it wants the King's consent before we can use it. This gained, we shall be free of the Huguenots for ever.'

"Then she told them that she had an army of soldiers who were ready to kill every Protestant in Paris, at a word from her, and that command could be sent at the same time to every town in France, and the Huguenots would be slaughtered without mercy. She said that in order to prevent any mistakes, all good Catholics must be told to burn candles in their windows and to wear a white cross on their hats and a white band on their arms. Then they might walk abroad in safety; for whoso went without these signs would most assuredly be killed without mercy.

"Catherine then told her fellow-conspirators that she had already decided what signal should be made for the massacre to begin. A big bell in one of the churches near the palace would be rung at two o'clock in the morning.

"When the Catholic nobles had heard the Queen Mother to the end, they agreed without further demur to all her horrible plans. The Duke of Guise especially approved them heartily, thinking at last that his enemy the Admiral would be put out of his way.

"Catherine then went straightway to demand audience of the King, her son. As a rule Charles was willing to do everything his mother asked of him, but in this matter he was not so inclined to obey at first. The thought of murdering thousands of innocent people made him tremble. Unfortunately his mother knew just how to manage him.

'These Protestants already plot together to take away your precious life, my son,' she said when he still refused to give his consent; 'you must act in self-defence. If we do not rid ourselves quickly of these people there is no knowing what they will do. It is sometimes merciful to be cruel, and sometimes cruel to be merciful.'

'But such a slaughter!' cried Charles. 'What I Am you afraid?' answered Catherine, with a sneer.

"This touched Charles very nearly. He did not like to have Catherine think him afraid, and at last, after a long time,

he weakly and against his better self gave in to the will of his mother.

'But hurry, hurry!' said he feverishly, 'and see that none are left to reproach me.'

"And so in secrecy the orders were given at once, and the Catholics warned what they must do, and bidden keep their homes for that night. Most of them were as ignorant of what was about to happen as I was.

"Three hours after midnight I was awakened from sleep by the sound of all the bells ringing and the confused cries of many people. My tutor and governor, St. Julien, together with my valet, went hastily out to ask the cause of the tumult. I never afterwards heard more of these men. I was alone in my chamber dressing myself when a few moments afterwards my landlord entered, pale and in much distress. He, too, was a Protestant, and having learned what was taking place, had consented to forswear his faith and to go to Mass at the Roman Catholic Church. And this he did in order to save his life, and preserve his house from robbery. He came to persuade me to do likewise, but I did not think it proper to follow his advice.

"Instead, I made up my mind to try and reach the College of Burgundy, where I went every day to study. There I hoped to hide safely until the danger was over. But the College stood in another part of the city, a long way from my lodgings, and the adventure was dangerous. I disguised myself therefore in a scholar's gown, and, thrusting a large Catholic prayer-book under my arm, sallied forth from the house.

"My heart knocked loudly and my knees trembled beneath me as I walked quietly along the street, and soon I was seized with horror at sight of the murderers, who ran through all parts of the city, armed with divers weapons, and shouting, 'Kill! Kill! Massacre the Huguenots!'

"Presently I fell into the clutches of a company of guards. 'How know we that this pretty boy is no wretched Protestant?' cried one.

'Cut off his silly head and he will tell thee,' cried another, with a terrible laugh.

"I stood still answering nothing, but in deadly fear for my life.

'He wears no badge on his arm, nor any hat,' said a third.

'Show us the book under thine arm, young sir,' said one who seemed their leader, and they snatched the prayer-book from me.

'Ho-ho! What have we here?' cried they, crowding all around me. 'Prayers to the Virgin! Prayers to St. Peter! This boy is no Huguenot, but a good Catholic, after all. Pass on, lads! Better luck next time!'

"Twice after this I fell into the same danger, and twice I escaped again by the same good fortune, and at last I arrived at the College.

"Here greater perils awaited me. The porter refused to open the gate to me. 'Let me in! Let me in! For the love of God!' I cried in agony, for at every moment the cries of the murdering soldiery in the distance were coming nearer. The man would answer me never a word. Then I bethought me to ask for the Principal of the College, by whom I was greatly favoured. At the same time I gave the porter some small pieces of money. To my great joy, he unbarred the gate and I entered.

"The Principal, whose name was La Faye, had in his room two Roman Catholic priests who looked on me with terrible eyes.

'Not children, not even babes, can be spared to-night,' they said, and eyed me again fiercely. I turned in terror to La Faye, who quickly took me to a distant room and there locked

the door upon me. For three days I was kept there a close prisoner.



A FEW MINUTES AFTERWARDS MY LANDLORD ENTERED, PALE AND IN MUCH DISTRESS.

"A servant brought me food, and from him I learned that my noble master, the King of Navarre, had escaped death only by giving his promise to attend Mass. My father wrote me it were better that I should do the same. Later, I found out

that twenty thousand Huguenots in the kingdom were killed during those terrible days.

"This cruel blow nigh broke the courage of our party, as Catherine planned it should. Nevertheless, those who were living rallied after a time and fled to Rochelle, our greatest stronghold.

"The King of Navarre, however, was kept a close prisoner at Court for a long time. He escaped, after all, and did many great deeds to further the Protestant cause in France before he came at last to be its King. Catherine's plans to ruin the Huguenots failed, as all wicked and unjust deeds must fail sooner or later, and in the end the Protestants were allowed to worship God freely and in their own way, although before this came to pass there was much suffering and war and famine in France."

CHAPTER VI

A STORY IN PRAISE OF FREEDOM AND IN PITY FOR MARIE ANTOINETTE

This little story is taken from one of the saddest parts of the big story of France. It is about a beautiful Queen who was not very wise, but who went to her death as bravely as any hero; and about a great people who, having suffered much injustice and oppression, rose to right their wrongs, but in so terrible a manner that the glory of the freedom they won was greatly dimmed thereby.

Nevertheless, you must not forget when you read this most piteous story of the Queen Marie Antoinette, that the people she wronged and who wronged her did right when they tried to win their freedom. There was nothing else for them to do, although the way they took was an exceeding hard way and brought much and bitter sorrow in the land.

You may be sure that it was best for France to be rid of the terrible burden of her kings. For centuries kings had reigned in France like emperors, having all power put into their hands or into those of their favourites. Few of these kings thought of anything but their own pleasure. So that they and their nobles might live at ease and make merry, the common folk had to pay heavy taxes. The king must have money for his pleasures, and so must the queen, and so must the nobles and their wives.

If the crops were bad, or there was a fever or a famine or a frost on the land, what cared the great king so long as he was well-fed and housed and warm? But the people must pay their taxes whatever happened, and they did. They were too oppressed, too poor, too unhappy to complain, and what good would it have done?

According to the Feudal System, they belonged body and soul to their masters, to the nobles on whose lands they worked. Who would hear them if they complained? They would only be thrust into prison to suffer still more.

But this injustice could not last forever. As the world grows older, men learn more of the power and beauty of freedom. When came the time of Louis the Fifteenth, bad king as he was, to reign over France, the people were a little better treated than they had been for many a long year; and so they began to lift up their heads and look about them, and see what was going on in the world. They began to think, and some of them wrote down what they thought; and when men begin to think for themselves, and speak out their thoughts, they cannot be slaves much longer.

It was towards the end of Louis the Fifteenth's long reign that Marie Antoinette, the daughter of the Empress of Austria, came to the French Court. She was only fourteen years old, a sweet little princess, with blue eyes and golden hair, and the prettiest, sauciest ways in the world. She could sing, she could dance, she could chatter all day long, and was as ready for fun as any schoolgirl.

And she came to the Court to marry the Dauphin of France. His name was Louis; he was the eldest son of the eldest son of Louis the Fifteenth, and heir to the throne, for his father was dead. He was fifteen years old when he married the little Austrian princess—a great, heavy, awkward boy, rather stupid, but very good-natured. He loved to hunt more than anything else in the world.

He was very kind to his little young wife, however, and did what he could to make her happy, often shielding her when the King's aunts would have punished her, for she was very mischievous, and given to laughing at the stiff and prim ways of these great ladies.

So these two, boy and girl, grew up in the careless French Court. No one told them of the needs and sorrows of

their people. They were only taught to amuse themselves, to behave well at Court ceremonies; how then could they know what the people wanted of them, when the time came for them to reign?

Five years after their marriage, Louis the Fifteenth died. When they told the Dauphin and his wife the great news, they both fell on their knees, crying, "Alas, alas! God help us! We are too young to reign!"

At first, however, all promised well. The people were proud of their King and his fair young Queen. It was very easy at first for Marie Antoinette, Austrian, foreigner though she was, to win the love of the whole gallant French nation. But it was not so easy to keep that love. Indeed, without knowing it herself, she very soon lost it.

She was very fond of pleasure. She went to balls and dances and card-parties, merry-makings of all kinds. She wore very fine dresses; she wasted a great deal of money; she gave honours and gold and lands to her favourite attendants and to all their relatives; and when she came to the end of her money, she went to the King and he paid her debts and gave her more. For he loved her and could refuse her nothing.

She wanted a house all her own. He gave her one called the Petit Trianon. It stood near the great palace of Versailles, and there she would give private parties to which only her friends were invited. She had this Petit Trianon refurnished, new gardens were laid out, a dairy and a small farm were built near it, and all the money needed for this came from the heavily taxed people.

Then some began to notice that the Queen never had money to give in charity, for all she spent so much on her own pleasure; and they did not like her any the better for it. They saw that the King, although so amiable, only did what the Ministers and the Queen told him to do, and they began to grow restless and rebellious.

One good Chief Minister might have saved France from the Revolution. A Minister named Turgot did try his best. He wanted to tax the rich people as well as the poor, but when this was suggested the nobles made such an outcry that the weak King refused his consent to the plan; so Turgot resigned. The Treasury grew emptier and emptier, the national debt rose higher and higher, and France was nearly bankrupt.

When the King's eldest son was born, Marie Antoinette regained the heart of her people for a time, for they were loyal still and rejoiced that an heir was born to France. But when famine spread over the land, and taxes were heavier, and money and bread more scarce, when the Treasury remained empty, and the King and his Ministers seemed to do nothing at all to fill it, the people began to hate the Queen. They began to blame her for all the sorrows that came upon them. They believed she made the King do foolish things; they believed that she hated them, and did all in her power to oppress them.

But what they did not believe or notice was that, after her children were born—and there were four of them—Marie Antoinette changed greatly in ways and deeds. She steadily grew more economical, less fond of pleasure and fine clothes; she lived very simply now, happy with her children, although two died before her greater sorrows came.

But the people knew not this; indeed, did not care to know it. They hated their Queen, and she feared them. As for the King, he tried to please everybody, and, of course, pleased nobody.

Meanwhile, matters grew worse and worse. Something had to be done or France would become utterly bankrupt. "Call a States-General," cried the people. They were bolder now. America had begun her War for Independence, and they were eager to follow the example.

Now the States-General was a gathering together of men from every city and town in the kingdom; whether they were rich or poor, they were allowed to speak. So that if the

King consented to call a States-General, it meant that the people themselves, through the delegates—men whom they chose—would have at last a voice in the government.

Louis the Sixteenth consented, much against the will of the Court; and the Queen, Marie Antoinette, wept. She was afraid of the power it gave to the people. But the whole nation rejoiced, for not only had Louis consented to the States-General, but he decreed that the delegates chosen by the people should exceed in number the delegates of the nobles and clergymen. This meant that the people could outvote the nobles. Power was already theirs to govern, and they meant to keep it. The aristocrats were very angry indeed with Louis. Many of them, foreseeing the coming trouble, made ready for flight.

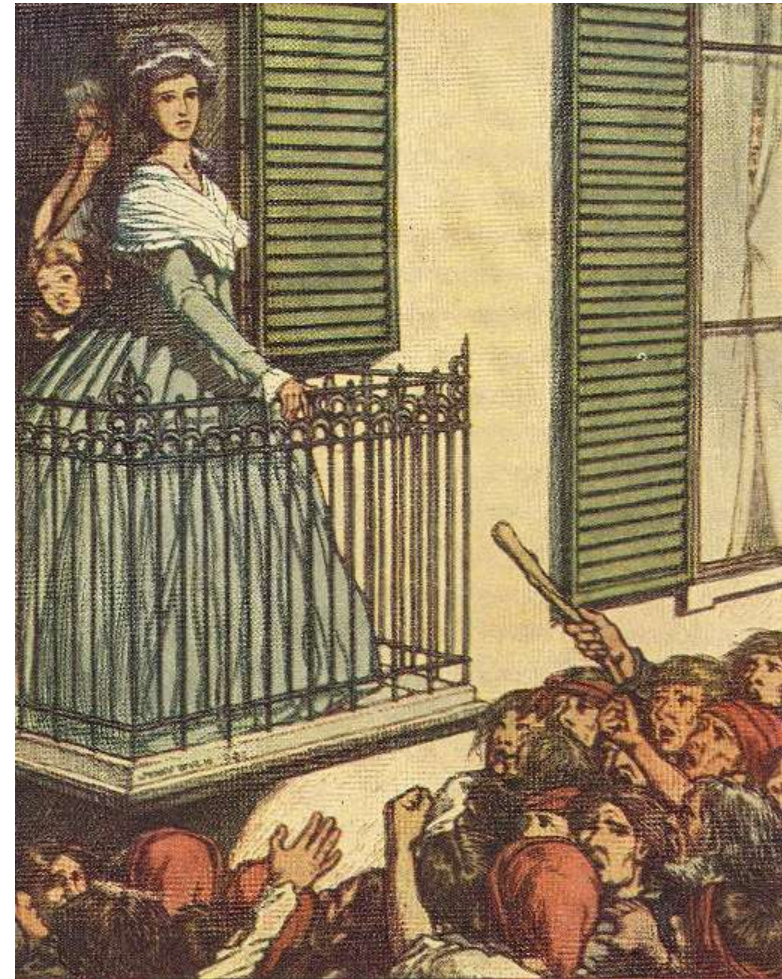
Upon the fifth of May 1789 the States-General was held at Versailles, but this new lift toward freedom brought little peace with it. The King did foolish things, and the Queen, understanding very little about politics, did not help him to set matters right.

For months famine and want had been sending thousands of miserable starving creatures to Paris, where they hoped find food. Now this rabble, among whom were thieves and robbers and murderers, was only waiting for the least excuse to plunder and pillage and riot.

Lack of bread soon gave them excuse. They came in hordes to the palace of Versailles. "Give us bread! Give us bread! O ye who spend our money!" they cried. The Queen could hear their terrible voices shouting underneath her windows: "Down with the Austrian! She is the cause of all our troubles!" All through the night the fierce mob surged round the palace gates, shrieking horrid words, threatening desperate deeds.

Towards four in the morning, the Queen was awakened by an attendant. "Save yourself, Madame, while there is yet time!" At the same time, a soldier called out, "Save the Queen!

They come to kill her!" She fled to the King's apartment and found her frightened children there, half-awake and shivering.



WITHOUT A WORD, MARIE ANTOINETTE WENT TO THE LITTLE BALCONY OUTSIDE THE APARTMENT, AND STOOD THERE IN FULL SIGHT OF THE ANGRY PEOPLE.

The General La Fayette entered. "There is only one way to calm them and save your lives, Madame," he said; "it is to let them see you."

"No children! The Austrian!" cried the voices outside.

"They mean to kill me," whispered the Queen as if to herself.

"Madame, it is the only way," answered La Fayette.

Without a word, Marie Antoinette went to the little balcony outside the apartment, and stood there in full sight of the angry people. At first there was silence; then some one cried, "To Paris, to Paris with them!"

To Paris they had to go, the whole royal family in the royal carriage, followed by as strange and ugly-looking a crowd as ever you might wish to see. Beggars, bandits, robbers, soldiers, and women more terrible and fierce than the men, all marched together, singing, "Cheer up, friends! We shall no longer starve! We bring the baker, the baker's wife, and the baker's little boy," meaning, of course, the King, Queen, and little Dauphin.

Even the Republicans, however, could not deny that through all the rough treatment, in spite of the insults that were heaped on her as time went on, the Queen ever bore herself nobly and behaved with true courtesy and kindness to her gaolers. For although they were not called prisoners, the royal family were allowed no freedom, but were kept in the palace of the Tuileries.

In fact, the government when it made laws now paid little or no attention to the King, while every now and then the wild mob would assail the Tuileries gates and keep the Queen in constant terror.

On the fourteenth of July 1789 the nation declared its independence, and ever since has made merry upon that day in honour of its freedom. After this, the King and Queen were in danger from the mob morning, noon, and night. The Queen steadily refused to leave her husband and children and save her life, as she might have done. The whole family did try to

escape, and managed to leave Paris, but were captured and brought back again.

By this time, the most of the nobles had fled to other countries and were doing their best to gather together an army to rescue their King and Queen. But there was little hope for them. Already the National Assembly, as the government was called, had found out that the mob was the real King in Paris; and the mob, led by a few violent men, was going mad with hatred and revenge.

They raised up a guillotine in a large square in the city, called the Square of the Revolution, where they brought the nobles and gentlefolk, both men and women, whom they had captured, and there they cut off their heads without mercy. No man's life was safe in those days. The King was put in prison, the Queen also and her children, and there they awaited their certain death.

It need not be told that they waited patiently and bravely. Both Louis and Marie Antoinette had done foolish things in their lives, and sometimes thoughtless and cruel things, but they knew how to meet death bravely. Louis went first to the guillotine and died as a gentleman should, forgiving his enemies their sin against him. And afterwards Queen Marie Antoinette followed. She, too, went uncomplaining and with a good heart, so that even her cruel captors were abashed at her heroism.

So France marched on her terrible way towards Freedom, a Republic with the whole of Europe against her to keep her from her goal. And so much blood did these poor mad people shed that very soon there was no government, no ruler at all in France, and only the army was left to uphold the nation; and of the army and its doings you shall hear in the next story.

CHAPTER VII

A STORY IN PRAISE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

It was the little man in the drab overcoat and three-cornered hat who did it—the little man with the smooth boyish face and the strangely keen eyes that seemed to be able to read your most secret thoughts; he did it; he saved France from the hands of her enemies, when it seemed as if fortune had deserted her altogether.

You must not think, however, that France had not made a brave fight for it; indeed, she had held her own against all Europe before ever the world had heard the name of Napoleon Bonaparte.

You must know that when France had declared her right to freedom, and proclaimed herself a Republic never more to ruled over by kings, the princes and rulers of the countries of Europe began to feel easy. They began to wonder if their own heads were safe.

"If goes on," said they, "our own people will maybe follow the bad example, and we shall all be murdered like Louis the Sixteenth." So they gave soldiers and money to help the refugee French nobles to win back again the crown for the royal house of France.

The little Dauphin had died during the Revolution, so that the next heir to the throne of France was Louis the Eighteenth, brother of Louis the Sixteenth.

France, determined to defend the Republic at all costs, sent out her army, and there was war in Europe.

Austria said, "The French rebels must be made to bow before a king again," and the Austrian army went forth to war.

England said, "Is this Freedom which allows murderers to rule? Better the old way," and England made ready her army and her fleet.

Prussia said, "Let me have a hand in the crushing of these people," and the Prussian army went forth to war.

So also the Russian, the Italian, and the Spanish armies. Thus, at one time or another, France had to face every great power in Europe.

The French army made a gallant stand, but they could not expect to succeed long against such great odds, for they had little or no help from their government in Paris. Paris, in truth, was so busy murdering and killing, and changing its rulers, that it neglected the army, sending little money or ammunition; and if you have no money and no ammunition, how can you go on fighting?

Matters became desperate. Something had to be done. Something was done; a few wise men who happened to be in power at that time appointed a new Commander-in-chief of the army and gave him power to do whatever he thought best. Napoleon Bonaparte was the name of this new man. Very few people knew anything about him. The name sounded strange to them:—"Who was he? What had he done?" they asked.

"He comes from Corsica. Twice before has he saved France—once at Toulon, when he showed the generals twice his age the right way to take the city; once in Paris, when he saved the government from being overthrown by a Royalist plot." So answered those who knew him, for most men who knew Napoleon believed he was the only man who could save France from her enemies.

But the old warriors who had led the army before and fought so well were doubtful at first of their new chief. "A young whipper-snapper to be set in authority over us," they cried indignantly. "What does he know of war? What is the experience of a young officer compared with ours? What kind of man must he be to have been given this honour?"

They soon found out what kind of a man this Bonaparte was. He showed his power at once, and, after the first interview, he had won most of them to approve of his plans.

The new campaign was to be opened in Italy, said he, and gave his reasons; and the march must be made so quickly as to surprise the Austrian and Italian armies, who would not expect them there. The soldiers heard him speak and would have followed him anywhere, so strong was the power of the man.

"Soldiers of France," he cried, "I come to lead you into the most fertile plains in the world, the plains of Lombardy. There you will find honour, glory, riches.—Now march!"

And march they did. What cared they if their clothes were ragged, their feet bare, when Napoleon was there to lead! They marched with almost miraculous speed through the mountains and into Italy, and if you will believe me, in fifteen days Napoleon had led that army to victory six times. His movements were so quick, his plan of fighting so new and strange, that he bewildered his enemies.

Again he spoke to his army: "Soldiers, in fifteen days you have won six victories, taken twenty-one colours, fifty pieces of cannon, many strong places, the richest land in Piedmont. Lacking everything, you have supplied yourselves with all. You have won battles without cannon, crossed rivers without bridges, made forced marches without shoes, lain down in camp, time and again, supperless and hungry. The two armies which attacked you now flee from you; only Republican armies could do such heroic deeds. Nevertheless, while you have done much, there is more to do. Neither Milan nor Turin is yours, and these towns command Italy. Forward, then! Your country expects much of you! Do not let her be disappointed!"

Forward again marched they, following close on the enemy. General Beaulieu, the head of the Austrian army, was

determined to defend Milan from these surprisingly victorious soldiers. He chose his position well, making for Lodi, a town on the river Adda. If by ill-fortune Napoleon forced him to retreat from Lodi, he had his choice of two refuges—Mantua, which lay to the east, a grim citadel almost impossible of capture, and Milan itself in the north-west, a strongly fortified town and the seat of the government. But Napoleon had made up his mind to give the Austrians such a thorough beating before they came either to Mantua or Milan that they would not be able to reach either of those cities.

He chased them so swiftly that the first part of the French army came upon the last part of the Austrian army just as they were entering Lodi, and thus the Austrians had no time to close the city gates after them. The two armies marched fighting as they went.

Now a long narrow wooden bridge led out from the town across the river Adda; this bridge was called the Bridge of Lodi. The French forced the Austrians to cross this bridge. On the other side, however, Beaulieu brought up his artillery in great numbers. They swept the bridge with a storm of shot. Napoleon immediately did the same upon his side so as to prevent the Austrians from destroying the bridge by setting it on fire, as they tried to do. Thus the two armies seemed at a deadlock, for who would dare cross the bridge under such deadly fire?

Napoleon then sent a troop of cavalry up the stream to find a safe ford; when he saw that they had crossed and were on the other side ready to help him, he turned to the grenadiers and gave the order to cross the bridge. Not only did he give the order but he led the way himself. After him sprang the giant Lannes, who was later on to be one of his best generals and friends. The grenadiers followed.

Once Napoleon feared they would fail him. They had been but a moment on the bridge, and in that moment a thousand had fallen. "On, on to victory," cried Lannes, springing forward, and the men who loved him obeyed. On

they pressed, trampling over the bodies of their dead comrades. Still the relentless storm of bullets rained down upon them. Still they poured over the bridge, nothing daunted, and at last came to the other side. Lannes was the first to reach the bank, Napoleon second. Lannes was promoted on the spot. After this their victory was assured. "What can we do against such a foe?" cried the Austrians; "he snatches victory out of the hands of death."

Four days after this Napoleon and his army marched in triumph through the streets of Milan. But at the Bridge of Lodi Napoleon had done more than defeat the enemy. He had shown his own soldiers that not only could he make the plans which gave them victory, but that he could fight side by side with them for it, showing equal courage; and they loving him for this, named him "The Little Corporal."

They loved him always—those brave soldiers—even to the end, when after defeating every nation in Europe, save only England and Russia, he lost all through his own vainglory and ambition.

The story of his wars, triumphs, and downfall is too long to tell here. He brought France both glory and shame, both victory and defeat. Through selfishness and ambition, he fell from his high place among the sons of men, and France he dragged with him in his fall.

But in Paris his memory is honoured with a wonderful marble tomb round which are grouped all the flags captured by him in battle, and there is scarcely a country in Europe which has not one or more flags there.

France recovered slowly after the downfall of Napoleon and his Empire, and after many adventures and misfortunes has at last come to be a prosperous and stable Republic, respected and honoured by all nations.