

Domremy has changed but little during the many years which have passed since that winter's night of the Epiphany. It was a farming village in Joan's day, it is a farming country to-day, with flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. It is a country big with the story of the past, a country filled with traditions, a land well suited to form the background in a picture, whose prominent figure is the historic Maid of Orleans.

Joan's Father.

Joan's father was one of the most prosperous farmers in the village. He owned his home and twenty acres of land. He was a much respected man. Joan's mother was a woman evidently far in advance of her village associates. She signed her name with the title of *Ronde*, only taken by those who had made the pilgrimage to the sacred city.

There were five children in this family, three sons and two daughters. The house has scarcely changed since St. Joan's birth. The arrangement of the rooms is copied of the Lorraine home, and the interior is in much the same condition as on the morning when Joan set out upon her mission. The sculptured portal opens directly into the living-room with its black oak ceiling and the wide-mouthed fireplace.

Joan was a happy little girl, beloved by all the village, and with an early home life as simple and apparently uneventful as that we see to-day along the village street. She arose with the birds, with brother or sister made the fire, patrolled her field across the grass to the brook for water. Domremy found the family afire, for in the peasant home the work is divided among old and young, and all must share it.

As we sit beside the door of the cottage watching the sunset fade, there comes from across the stream a faint flicker. It is the flocks and the herds coming home, gathering as they have probably done ever since Joan herself drove them home. A flock reach the church, part turn to the left, for the barns at the mill, and the others continue down the street. It requires but little imagination to re-create Joan in the black frock, sturdy-shouldered, dauntless maid who followed in their train.

A Pious Child.

The peasants, too, come in from the fields, stooping picturesquely beneath a pile of fagots, or a basket of greens. Then the fires are lighted, the flickering light shines across the falling darkness, the table is spread for the evening meal, and the work of the day is done.

What stories could be told to us by the little latticed window of the white church walls of the Arc cottage if the walls could speak! We can picture Joan looking out of walls, as they show beneath the garden trees, and recall her pious devotion of the younger hour when she fell asleep with all the gentle confidence of her childhood faith, never dreaming of any future beyond the quiet life in that Lorraine Valley.

The pious child was little Joan, with a eyes most simple and homely, but born of the intensity of character which made martyrs in the earlier days. On Sunday morning, as

the bell from the little church sent forth its peal, the peasants assembled for worship. To-day the chapel is filled with pictures and statues so typical of the peasant villages.

Beneath an arch in quaint Gothic letters we read: "Here Joan was Baptised." "Here Joan Received Communion." "Here Joan Used to Pray." The neighborhood is full of shrines where the little maid went often in devotion, and on which the peasants hang decorations and wreaths.

The childhood of Joan was peaceful, happy, and industrious. Hers was a sweet, trustful character, and from her face shone a soul as fresh and pure as the little brook which ran bubbling beside her home.

Domremy, because a part of Lorraine, was warmly loyal to France, but only a quarter of a mile across the fields was Greux, with its inhabitants hotly Burgundian in sentiment, and, therefore, ranked by the loyal villagers of Domremy as the enemies of the King. Rumors of the great war and the English invasions now and then reached the hamlet from travellers over the highway, and partly sob it ran high across the meadows.

Joan and her brothers took an active part in the differences of opinion between the children of the hamlets. At last the war was brought to their very village, and Jacques of Arc and his family fled to Neufchateau until things were safer in their home land. These were some of the things which taught Joan, child though she was, the deadly peril which threatened her home land. What wonder, then, could be heard recitals night after night, tales of the destruction being done? The condition of France was her only thought.

Her First Vision.

She had reached the age of thirteen when she saw her first vision. It happened when she was in the meadow. It seemed some one said to her: "Joan, hasten home; your mother wishes you."

She ran to her mother. "Did you want me?" she asked. Her mother said, "No." She started back to her playmates when a transparent shining mist appeared in front of her, and out of the mist came a voice telling the strange tale, to this country girl, that she was destined for another life than that of the valley; she was to be chosen to fulfil the ancient prophecy and re-establish the Dauphin on the throne of his fathers. That to accomplish this she must leave home, become a great warrior, lead the army, an chief of decision, and that all should follow her guidance. Then the voice ceased, and the mist faded, leaving the girl dazed and overcome. For the next five years the girl remained in great perplexity.

As she grew older the visions became more apparent, urging her to her mission and bidding her for delay.

Joan often spoke to her playmates of these visions and her father was surprised and angry that his daughter made such statements. He warned her to cease her foolish dreaming.

One day while alone in the wood, Joan again heard the familiar voices, and tender, urgent tones told her of the condition of France. Then the modesty, simplicity, and

the humility of the peasant girl were apparent as she pleaded her inexperience, her ignorance of martial life, or her power over the treepers. Still the voices urged her on, urged her to leave home, to forsake her family, the good Curé, and the peaceful valley. They directed her to go to the chateau and commandant at Vaucouleurs, and closed with the inspiring statement that it was but the will of God which led her onward, and all should be as He commanded.

Trust in God.

Can you realise what this meant to Joan? Only a faith as great as hers could have brought her to do it—an implicit trust in God. She did not falter, but went steadfastly onward into a future to which the voices called her.

As the months went on, and now and then the news came back to the little hamlet, it was no longer the woes of France which the villagers discussed. For now the maid was no longer looked upon as a dreamer, for she had achieved success with Baudricourt at Vaucouleurs, with the Dauphin at Chinon, before the council at Poitiers, or in the wonderful attack which raised the siege of Orleans!

Then came the joyful tidings that the Dauphin was on his way to Rheims, and half Domremy went out to meet the troops at Chailon, and to go up to the coronation in the cathedral city. Was it a proud, haughty warrior maid with a spirit vain from the honors heaped upon her, that greeted the village folk? No, Joan, whom they saw at the head of the troops, was the same frank, winsome, unselfish girl they had known in childhood.

It is not the national monuments which rise on the green hill-sides of Domremy, Vaucouleurs, or Reims which keep fresh the memory of this maid. Her grandest monument is the spirit of liberty and faith which she has left as a grand inheritance to the French people; and upon that, as upon a massive foundation, rises the superstructure of the united nation of to-day.

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