JOAN OF ARC*
[Part I]

First published in *Tait's*, XIV, March 1847, pp. 184–90. The essay was printed as 'BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY.' in a centred line following the title and immediately preceding the text.

Reprinted in *F*, III, *Miscellaneous Essays* (1851), pp. 79–100, 123–4.

Revised text, carrying many accidentals but only two significant variants from *F*, in *SGG*, III, *Miscellanies, Chiefly Narrative* (1854), pp. 209–28.

There are no manuscripts.

Joan of Arc (French, Jeanne d'Arc; 1412–31) was known as La Pucelle, or the Maid of Orléans. She was born of peasant parentage in Domrémy, on the borders of the duchies of Bar and Lorraine. She felt her mission was to expel the English and their Burgundian allies from the Valois kingdom of France, and that she was guided in this task by visions and the celestial voices of St Michael, St Catherine, and St Margaret. In 1428, she led the French army in the momentous victory at Orléans that repulsed an English attempt to conquer France, and decisively turned the Hundred Years' War in France's favour. Joan was captured by the English and their French collaborators in 1430, and burned as a heretic a year later. In 1455–6, the Church retried her case, and she was pronounced innocent. She was canonized by Pope Benedict XV in 1920.

De Quincey wrote his account of Joan 'in reference' to the assessment of the French historian Jules Michelet (1789–1874), who discussed Joan at length in volume five (1841) of his monumental seventeen-volume *Histoire de France* (1833–67). But De Quincey's attitude towards Michelet is decidedly hostile: as

* *Arc:* – Modern France, that should know a great deal better than myself, insists that the name is not d'Arc, *i.e.* of Arc, but *Darc*. Now it happens sometimes, that if a person, whose position guarantees his access to the best information, will content himself with gloomy dogmatism, striking the table with his fist, and saying in a terrific voice – 'It *is* so; and there's an end of it,' – one bows deferentially, and submits. But if, unhappily for himself, won by this docility, he relents too amiably into reasons and arguments, probably one raises an insurrection against him that may never be crushed; for in the fields of logic one can skirmish, perhaps, as well as he. Had he confined himself to dogmatism; he would have entrenched his position in darkness, and have hidden his own vulnerable points. But, coming down to base reasons, he lets in light, and one sees where to plant the blows. Now, the worshipful reason of modern France for disturbing the old received spelling, is – that Jean Hordal, a descendant of *La Pucelle's* brother, spelled the name *Darc*, in 1612.[1] But what of that? Beside the chances that M. Hordal might be a gigantic blockhead, it is notorious that what small matter of spelling Providence had thought fit to disburse amongst man in the seventeenth century, was all monopolised by printers: in France, much more so.

he put it in a letter to his daughter Florence, he 'leveled' the paper 'partly at M. Michelet….He is…an author of prodigious popularity in France, and generally on the Continent….But I gave it him right and left'. As De Quincey makes clear in the second instalment of the essay, however, he did not actually work from Michelet's original French text. Rather, his source is a translation of Michelet by Walter Keating Kelly, whose many works include *Narrative of the French Revolution of 1848* (1848) and *Life of Wellington, for boys* (1853). Kelly published his two-volume version of Michelet's *Histoire* in 1844–6. De Quincey found Kelly's translation 'faithful, spirited, and idiomatically English – liable, in fact, only to the single reproach of occasional provincialisms' (Pforzheimer. Misc. MS 1782; see below, p. 86).

De Quincey had plans for the essay that extended well beyond its original appearance in *Tait's*. 'The *whole* of my paper is printed', he told Florence in February 1847: 'but only 1/3rd will appear in the March No. of the Mag. It will be reprinted immediately – somewhat enlarged. The *closing* page of the art., which will not be published till the April No., I advise you to read. Next after the *Vision of Sudden Death*, it is the most elaborate and solemn *bravura* of rhetoric that I have composed'. Not a third, but a half, of the essay, however, was published in the March number, and the second half did not appear until August. What is more, by that time De Quincey's plans seem to have changed, for he now considered republishing 'Joan of Arc' with 'The Nautico-Military Nun of Spain', and 'a few words of preface telling the public what *I* think of them, and what place *I* expect for them', as he put it in another letter to Florence of September 1847. His enthusiasm for the paper, however, was unchanged. When his daughter Margaret told him that Florence had read his essay on 'Schlosser's Literary History of the Eighteenth Century', De Quincey was again anxious that she read 'Joan of Arc'. 'By what strange fatality is it', he asked, 'that, if I write a hurried paper, by its subject necessarily an inferior one, some friend is sure to show it to you? And no friend thought it worth while to show you the "Spanish Nun's" passage across the Andes, or the "Joan of Arc"' (Pforzheimer. Misc. MS 1782; Japp, p. 266).

De Quincey's essay is one of many remarkable treatments of Joan, extending from Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part I*, through David Hume's famous account in his *History of England* (1754–62) and Voltaire's *La pucelle d'Orléans* (1755), to Robert Southey's *Joan of Arc* (1796), Friedrich Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* (1801), Felicia Hemans's 'Joan of Arc, in Rheims' (1828), Mark Twain's *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc* (1896), and George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* (1923). De Quincey's essay drew a good deal of contemporary praise. 'I read in De Quincey's beautiful article on *Joan of Arc*, which is excellent in style', wrote Henry Crabb Robinson in 1854. That same year the *Westminster Review* observed, in reference to 'Joan of Arc', that it knew 'of no other author who so thoroughly understands the *melody* of prose: [De Quincey's] finest sentences seem to have a rhythmic flow; and prose writing in his hands rises almost into the dignity of a poem'. The *Eclectic Review* went even further:

> His 'Joan of Arc' is a strain of a loftier mood, and rises to the dignity and power of that highest kind of history which verges on and over the limit of poetry. De Quincey, indeed, we have often pronounced to be, since Tac-

> itus, *potentially* the greatest of history writers. He is as eloquent, as epic, as impassioned in his nobler narrative as Carlyle, and he is far more dignified, less melodramatic, and purer in style.

In *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), John Ruskin quoted De Quincey's description of the role played by 'wild and fair nature' in 'the education of Joan of Arc' (*HCR*, vol. II, p. 740; Henry Bright, 'Thomas De Quincey and his Works' in *Westminster Review*, NS 5 (April 1854), p. 533; Anon., '*Selections Grave and Gay*…by Thomas De Quincey' in *Eclectic Review*, NS 8 (October 1854), p. 398; *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, 39 vols (London: Allen, 1903–12), vol. XVIII, p. 133; see also, Gerard de Contades, 'La *Jeanne D'Arc* de Thomas De Quincey' in *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 115 (15 February 1893), pp. 907–25).

More recently, Angela Leighton explores the implications of De Quincey's claim in 'Joan of Arc' that women 'can do one thing as well as the best of us men – a greater thing than even Mozart is known to have done, or Michael Angelo – you can die grandly, and as goddesses would die were goddesses mortal' (see below, p. 000). Leighton observes: 'The scene of woman's death is the scene of her artistic, emotional and even political success. She is thus generously compensated for her unquestioned intellectual inferiority'. Morrison points out that De Quincey's assertion is strikingly anticipated only a year earlier by Edgar Allan Poe's declaration in 'The Philosophy of Composition' (1846) that 'the death...of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic in the world' (Angela Leighton, 'De Quincey and Women' in *Beyond Romanticism: New Approaches to Texts and Contexts*, eds. Stephen Copley and John Whale (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 160; Robert Morrison, 'Poe's De Quincey, Poe's Dupin' in *Essays in Criticism*, 51.4 (2001), p. 427).

The annotation for this essay draws on previous editions of 'Joan of Arc' by J. W. Abernethy (New York: Maynard, Merril, 1889), Henry H. Belfield (Boston: Sibley, 1892), J. M. Hart (New York: Holt, 1893), Milton Haight Turk (Boston: Ginn, 1902), Carol M. Newman (New York: Macmillan, 1906), and R. Adelaide Witham (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906).

In reference to M. Michelet's History of France.

WHAT is to be thought of *her?* What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine,[2] that – like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judaea – rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an *act*, by a victorious *act*, such as no man could deny.[3] But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies[4] bore witness to the boy as no pretender: but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them *from a station of good will*,[5] both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies

it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose – to a splendour and a noon-day prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a bye-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah.[6] The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs[7] which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent: No! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for *thy* side, that never once – no, not for a moment of weakness – didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honour from man. Coronets for thee! Oh no! Honours, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood.* Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead.[9] Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors[10] to come and receive a robe of honour, but she will be found *en contumace*.[11] When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen,[12] shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country – thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; to *do* – never for thyself, always for others; to *suffer* – never in the persons of generous champions, always in thy own: – that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou said'st, is short: and the sleep, which is in the grave,[13] is long! Let me use that life, so transitory, for the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long. This pure creature – pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious – never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not in vision perhaps the aërial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen[14] as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints; these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard for ever.

Great was the throne of France even in those days, and great was he that sate upon it: but well Joanna knew that not the throne, nor he that sate upon it, was for *her;* but, on the contrary, that she was for *them;* not she by them, but they by her, should rise from the dust. Gorgeous were the lilies of France,

* *Those that share thy blood*: – a collateral relative of Joanna's was subsequently ennobled by the title of *du Lys*.[8]

and for centuries had the privilege to spread their beauty over land and sea, until, in another century, the wrath of God and man combined to wither them;[15] but well Joanna knew, early at Domrémy she had read that bitter truth, that the lilies of France would decorate no garland for *her*. Flower nor bud, bell nor blossom, would ever bloom for *her*.

But stop. What reason is there for taking up this subject of Joanna precisely in this spring of 1847? Might it not have been left till the spring of 1947? or, perhaps, left till called for? Yes, but it *is* called for; and clamorously. You are aware, reader, that amongst the many original thinkers, whom modern France has produced, one of the reputed leaders is M. Michelet. All these writers are of a revolutionary cast; not in a political sense merely, but in all senses: mad, oftentimes, as March hares[16] crazy with the laughing-gas of recovered liberty; drunk with the wine-cup of their mighty Revolution;[17] snorting, whinnying, throwing up their heels, like wild horses in the boundless Pampas,[18] and running races of defiance with snipes, or with the winds, or with their own shadows, if they can find nothing else to challenge. Some time or other, I, that have leisure to read, may introduce *you*, that have not, to two or three dozen of these writers; of whom I can assure you beforehand that they are often profound, and at intervals are even as impassioned as if they were come of our best English blood, and sometimes (because it is not pleasant that people should be too easy to understand) almost as obscure as if they had been suckled by transcendental German nurses.[19] But now, confining our attention to M. Michelet – who is quite sufficient to lead a man into a gallop, requiring two relays, at least, of fresh readers; – we in England – who know him best by his worst book, the book against Priests,[20] &c., which has been most circulated – know him disadvantageously. That book is a rhapsody of incoherence. M. Michelet was light-headed, I believe, when he wrote it: and it is well that his keepers overtook him in time to intercept a second part. But his *History of France* is quite another thing. A man, in whatsoever craft he sails, cannot stretch away out of sight when he is linked to the windings of the shore by towing ropes of history. Facts, and the consequences of facts, draw the writer back to the falconer's lure from the giddiest heights of speculation. Here, therefore – in his *France* – if not always free from flightiness, if now and then off like a rocket for an airy wheel in the clouds, M. Michelet, with natural politeness, never forgets that he has left a large audience waiting for him on earth, and gazing upwards in anxiety for his return: return, therefore, he does. But History, though clear of certain temptations in one direction, has separate dangers of its own. It is impossible so to write a History of France, or of England – works becoming every hour more indispensable to the inevitably-political man of this day – without perilous openings for assault. If I, for instance, on the part of England, should happen to turn my labours into that channel, and (on the model of Lord Percy going to Chevy Chase) –

——————'A vow to God should make
My pleasure in the Michelet woods
Three summer days to take,'[21]

– probably from simple delirium, I might hunt M. Michelet into *delirium tremens*.[22] Two strong angels stand by the side of History, whether French History or English, as heraldic supporters: the angel of Research on the left hand, that must read millions of dusty parchments, and of pages blotted with lies; the angel of Meditation on the right hand, that must cleanse these lying records with fire, even as of old the draperies of *asbestos* were cleansed, and must quicken them into regenerated life. Willingly I acknowledge that no man will ever avoid innumerable errors of detail: with so vast a compass of ground to traverse, this is impossible: but such errors (though I have a bushel on hand, at M. Michelet's service) are not the game I chase: it is the bitter and unfair spirit in which M. Michelet writes against England. Even *that*, after all, is but my secondary object: the real one is Joanna, the Pucelle d'Orleans,[23] for herself.

I am not going to write the History of *La Pucelle*: to do this, or even circumstantially to report the history of her persecution and bitter death, of her struggle with false witnesses and with ensnaring judges, it would be necessary to have before us *all* the documents, and, therefore, the collection only now forthcoming in Paris.[24] But *my* purpose is narrower. There have been great thinkers, disdaining the careless judgments of contemporaries, who have thrown themselves boldly on the judgment of a far posterity, that should have had time to review, to ponder, to compare. There have been great actors on the stage of tragic humanity that might, with the same depth of confidence, have appealed from the levity of compatriot friends – too heartless for the sublime interest of their story, and too impatient for the labour of sifting its perplexities – to the magnanimity and justice of enemies. To this class belongs the Maid of Arc. The Romans were too faithful to the ideal of grandeur in themselves not to relent, after a generation or two, before the grandeur of Hannibal.[25] Mithridates – a more doubtful person – yet, merely for the magic perseverance of his indomitable malice, won from the same Romans the only real honour that ever he received on earth.[26] And we English have ever shown the same homage to stubborn enmity. To work unflinchingly for the ruin of England; to say through life, by word and by deed – *Delenda est Anglia Victrix!*[27] that one purpose of malice, faithfully pursued, has quartered some people upon our national funds of homage as by a perpetual annuity. Better than an inheritance of service rendered to England herself, has sometimes proved the most insane hatred to England. Hyder Ali, even his far inferior son Tippoo, and Napoleon[28] – have all benefitted by this disposition amongst ourselves to exaggerate the merit of diabolic enmity. Not one of these men was ever capable, in a solitary instance, of praising an enemy – [what do you say to *that*, reader?] and yet, in *their* behalf, we consent to forget, not their

crimes only, but (which is worse) their hideous bigotry and anti-magnanimous egotism; for nationality it was not.[29] Suffrein,[30] and some half dozen of other French nautical heroes, because rightly they did us all the mischief they could, [which was really great] are names justly reverenced in England. On the same principle, La Pucelle d'Orleans, the victorious enemy of England, has been destined to receive her deepest commemoration from the magnanimous justice of Englishmen.[31]

Joanna, as we in England should call her, but, according to her own statement, Jeanne (or, as M. Michelet asserts, Jean*) d'Arc, was born at Domrémy, a village on the marches of Lorraine and Champagne, and dependent upon the town of Vaucouleurs. I have called her a Lorrainer, not simply because the word is prettier, but because Champagne too odiously reminds us English of what are for *us* imaginary wines, which, undoubtedly, *La Pucelle* tasted as rarely as we English; we English, because the Champagne of London is chiefly grown in Devonshire; *La Pucelle*, because the Champagne of Champagne never, by any chance, flowed into the fountain of Domrémy, from which only she drank. M. Michelet will have her to be a *Champenoise*, and for no better reason than that she 'took after her father,' who happened to be a *Champenois*. I am sure she did *not:* for her father was a filthy old fellow, whom I shall soon teach the judicious reader to hate. But, (says M. Michelet, arguing the case physiologically) 'she had none of the Lorrainian asperity;' no, it seems she had only 'the gentleness of Champagne, its simplicity mingled with sense and acuteness, as you find it in Joinville.'[33] All these things she had; and she was worth a thousand Joinvilles, meaning either the prince so called, or the fine old crusader.[34] But still, though I love Joanna dearly, I cannot shut my eyes entirely to the Lorraine element of 'asperity' in her nature. No; really now, she must have had a shade of *that*, though very slightly developed – a mere soupçon,[35] as French cooks express it in speaking of cayenne pepper, when she caused so many of our English throats to be cut. But could she do less? No: I always say so; but still you never saw a person kill even a trout with a perfectly 'Champagne' face of 'gentleness and simplicity,' though often, no doubt, with considerable 'acuteness.' All your cooks and butchers wear a *Lorraine* cast of expression.

* *'Jean'*: – M. Michelet asserts that there was a mystical meaning at that aera in calling a child *Jean;* it implied a secret commendation of a child, if not a dedication, to St John the Evangelist,[32] the beloved disciple, the apostle of love and mysterious visions. But, really, as the name was so exceedingly common, few people will detect a mystery in calling a *boy* by the name of Jack, though it *does* seem mysterious to call a girl Jack. It may be less so in France, where a beautiful practice has always prevailed of giving to a boy his mother's name – preceded and strengthened by a male name, as *Charles Anne*, *Victor Victoire*. In cases where a mother's memory has been unusually dear to a son, this vocal memento of her, locked into the circle of his own name, gives to it the tenderness of a testamentary relique, or a funeral ring. I presume, therefore, that *la Pucelle* must have borne the baptismal names of Jeanne Jean; the latter with no reference to so sublime a person as St John, but simply to some relative.

These disputes, however, turn on refinements too nice. Domrémy stood upon the frontiers; and, like other frontiers, produced a *mixed* race representing the *cis* and the *trans*.[36] A river (it is true) formed the boundary line at this point – the river Meuse; and *that* in old days might have divided the populations; but in these days it did not – there were bridges, there were ferries, and weddings crossed from the right bank to the left. Here lay two great roads, not so much for travellers, that were few, as for armies that were too many by half. These two roads, one of which was the great high road between France and Germany, *decussated* at this very point; which is a learned way of saying that they formed a St Andrew's cross, or letter of X. I hope the compositor will choose a good large X, in which case the point of intersection, the *locus* of conflux for these four diverging arms, will finish the reader's geographical education, by showing him to a hair's breadth where it was that Domrémy stood. These roads, so grandly situated, as great trunk arteries between two mighty realms,* and haunted for ever by wars or rumours of wars,[38] decussated (for anything I know to the contrary) absolutely under Joanna's bedroom window; one rolling away to the right, past Monsieur D'Arc's old barn, and the other, unaccountably preferring, (but there's no disputing about tastes), to sweep round that odious man's odious pigstye to the left.

Things being situated as is here laid down, viz. in respect of the decussation, and in respect of Joanna's bed-room; it follows that, if she had dropped her glove by accident from her chamber window into the very bull's eye of the target, in the centre of X, not one of several great potentates could (though all animated by the sincerest desires for the peace of Europe) have possibly come to any clear understanding on the question of whom the glove was meant for. Whence the candid reader perceives at once the necessity for at least four bloody wars. Falling indeed a little farther, as, for instance, into the pigstye, the glove could not have furnished to the most peppery prince any shadow of excuse for arming: he would not have had a leg to stand upon in taking such a perverse line of conduct. But, if it fell (as by the hypothesis it did) into the one sole point of ground common to four kings, it is clear that, instead of no leg to stand upon, eight separate legs would have had no ground to stand upon unless by treading on each other's toes. The philosopher, therefore, sees clearly the necessity of a war, and regrets that sometimes nations do not wait for grounds of war so solid.

In the circumstances supposed, though the four kings might be unable to see their way clearly without the help of gunpowder to any decision upon Joanna's intention, she – poor thing! – never could mistake her intentions for a moment. All her love was for France; and, therefore, any glove she might drop into the *quadrivium*[39] must be wickedly missent by the post-office, if it found its way to any king but the king of France.

* And reminding one of that inscription, so justly admired by Paul Richter, which a Russian Czarina placed on a guide post near Moscow – *This is the road that leads to Constantinople*.[37]

On whatever side of the border chance had thrown Joanna, the same love to France would have been nurtured. For it is a strange fact, noticed by M. Michelet and others, that the Dukes of Bar and Lorraine had for generations pursued the policy of eternal warfare with France[40] on their own account, yet also of eternal amity and league with France in case anybody else presumed to attack her. Let peace settle upon France, and before long you might rely upon seeing the little vixen Lorraine flying at the throat of France. Let France be assailed by a formidable enemy, and instantly you saw a Duke of Lorraine or Bar insisting on having his throat cut in support of France; which favour accordingly was cheerfully granted to them in three great successive battles by the English and by the Turkish Sultan, viz., at Crécy, at Nicopolis, and at Agincourt.[41]

This sympathy with France during great eclipses in those that during ordinary seasons were always teasing her with brawls and guerrilla inroads, strengthened the natural piety to France of those that were confessedly the children of her own house. The outposts of France, as one may call the great frontier provinces, were of all localities the most devoted to the Fleurs de Lys.[42] To witness, at any great crisis, the generous devotion to these lilies of the little fiery cousin that in gentler weather was for ever tilting at her breast, could not but fan the zeal of the legitimate daughter: whilst to occupy a post of honour on the frontiers against an old hereditary enemy of France,[43] would naturally have stimulated this zeal by a sentiment of martial pride, had there even been no other stimulant to zeal by a sense of danger always threatening, and of hatred always smouldering. That great four-headed road was a perpetual memento to patriotic ardour. To say, this way lies the road to Paris – and that other way to Aix-la-Chapelle,[44] this to Prague, that to Vienna – nourished the warfare of the heart by daily ministrations of sense. The eye that watched for the gleams of lance or helmet from the hostile frontier, the ear that listened for the groaning of wheels,[45] made the highroad itself, with its relations to centres so remote, into a manual of patriotic enmity.

The situation, therefore, *locally* of Joanna was full of profound suggestions to a heart that listened for the stealthy steps of change and fear that too surely were in motion. But if the place were grand, the times, the burthen of the times, was far more so. The air overhead in its upper chambers was *hurtling* with the obscure sound; was dark with sullen fermenting of storms that had been gathering for a hundred and thirty years. The battle of Agincourt in Joanna's childhood had re-opened the wounds of France. Crécy and Poictiers,[46] those withering overthrows for the chivalry of France, had been tranquillised by more than half a century; but this resurrection of their trumpet wails made the whole series of battles and endless skirmishes take their stations as parts in one drama. The graves that had closed sixty years ago, seemed to fly open in sympathy with a sorrow that echoed their own. The monarchy of France laboured in extremity, rocked and reeled like a ship fighting with the darkness of monsoons. The madness of the poor King (Charles

VI.)[47] falling in at such a crisis, like the case of women labouring in childbirth during the storming of a city, trebled the awfulness of the time. Even the wild story of the incident which had immediately occasioned the explosion of this madness – the case of a man unknown, gloomy, and perhaps maniacal himself, coming out of a forest at noonday, laying his hand upon the bridle of the King's horse, checking him for a moment to say, 'Oh, King, thou art betrayed,' and then vanishing no man knew whither, as he had appeared for no man knew what – fell in with the universal prostration of mind that laid France on her knees as before the slow unweaving of some ancient prophetic doom.[48] The famines, the extraordinary diseases, the insurrections of the peasantry[49] up and down Europe, these were chords struck from the same mysterious harp; but these were transitory chords. There had been others of deeper and more ominous sound. The termination of the crusades, the destruction of the Templars, the Papal interdicts, the tragedies caused or suffered by the House of Anjou, by the Emperor[50] – these were full of a more permanent significance; but since then the colossal figure of feudalism was seen standing as it were on tiptoe at Crécy for flight from earth: that was a revolution unparalleled; yet *that* was a trifle by comparison with the more fearful revolutions that were mining below the Church. By her own internal schisms, by the abominable spectacle of a double Pope[51] – so that no man, except through political bias, could even guess which was Heaven's vicegerent, and which the creature of hell – she was already rehearsing, as in still earlier forms she had rehearsed, the first rent in her foundations (reserved for the coming century) which no man should ever heal.[52]

These were the loftiest peaks of the cloudland in the skies that to the scientific gazer first caught the colours of the *new* morning in advance. But the whole vast range alike of sweeping glooms overhead, dwelt upon all meditative minds, even those that could not distinguish the altitudes nor decipher the forms. It was, therefore, not her own age alone, as affected by its immediate calamities, that lay with such weight upon Joanna's mind; but her own age, as one section in a vast mysterious drama, unweaving through a century back, and drawing nearer continually to crisis after crisis. Cataracts and rapids were heard roaring a-head; and signs were seen far back, by help of old men's memories, which answered secretly to signs now coming forward on the eye, even as locks answer to keys. It was not wonderful that in such a haunted solitude, with such a haunted heart, Joanne should see angelic visions, and hear angelic voices. These voices whispered to her the duty, imposed upon herself, of delivering France. Five years she listened to these monitory voices with internal struggles. At length she could resist no longer. Doubt gave way; and she left her home in order to present herself at the Dauphin's court.

The education of this poor girl was mean according to the present standard; was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard; and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. She read nothing, for she could not read; but she had heard others read parts of the Roman

martyrology. She wept in sympathy with the sad *Misereres* of the Romish chaunting;[53] she rose to heaven with the glad triumphant *Gloria in Excelcis*:[54] she drew her comfort and her vital strength from the rites of her church. But, next after these spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a-year, in order to keep them in any decent bounds.[55] Fairies are important, even in a statistical view: certain weeds mark poverty in the soil, fairies mark its solitude. As surely as the wolf retires before cities, does the fairy sequester herself from the haunts of licensed victuallers.[56] A village is too much for her nervous delicacy: at most, she can tolerate a distant view of a hamlet. We may judge, therefore, by the uneasiness and extra trouble which they gave to the parson, in what strength the fairies mustered at Domrémy, and, by a satisfactory consequence, how thinly sown with men and women must have been that region even in its inhabited spots. But the forests of Domrémy – those were the glories of the land: for, in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. 'Abbeys there were, and abbey windows, dim and dimly seen – as Moorish temples of the Hindoos,'[57] that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys, in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; many enough to spread a net-work or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness. This sort of religious talisman being secured, a man the most afraid of ghosts (like myself, suppose, or the reader), becomes armed into courage to wander for days in their sylvan recesses. The mountains of the Vosges on the eastern frontier of France, have never attracted much notice from Europe, except in 1813–14, for a few brief months, when they fell within Napoleon's line of defence against the Allies.[58] But they are interesting for this, amongst other features – that they do not, like some loftier ranges, repel woods: the forests and they are on sociable terms. *Live and let live*[59] is their motto. For this reason, in part, these tracts in Lorraine were a favourite hunting ground with the Carlovingian princes. About six hundred years before Joanna's childhood, Charlemagne[60] was known to have hunted there. That, of itself, was a grand incident in the traditions of a forest or a chace. In these vast forests, also, were to be found (if the race was not extinct) those mysterious fawns[61] that tempted solitary hunters into visionary and perilous pursuits. Here was seen, at intervals, that ancient stag[62] who was already nine hundred years old, at the least, but possibly a hundred or two more, when met by Charlemagne; and the thing was put beyond doubt by the inscription upon his golden collar. I believe Charlemagne knighted the stag; and, if ever he is met again by a king, he ought to be made an earl – or, being upon the marches of France, a marquess.[63] Observe, I don't absolutely vouch for all these things: my own

opinion varies. On a fine breezy forenoon I am audaciously sceptical; but as twilight sets in, my credulity becomes equal to anything that could be desired. And I have heard candid sportsmen declare that, outside of these very forests near the Vosges, they laughed loudly at all the dim tales connected with their haunted solitudes; but, on reaching a spot notoriously eighteen miles deep within them, they agreed with Sir Roger de Coverley that a good deal might be said on both sides.[64]

Such traditions, or any others that (like the stag) connect distant generations with each other, are, for that cause, sublime; and the sense of the shadowy, connected with such appearances that reveal themselves or not according to circumstances, leaves a colouring of sanctity over ancient forests, even in those minds that utterly reject the legend as a fact.

But, apart from all distinct stories of that order, in any solitary frontier between two great empires, as here, for instance, or in the desert between Syria and the Euphrates,[65] there is an inevitable tendency, in minds of any deep sensibility to people the solitudes with phantom images of powers that were of old so vast. Joanna, therefore, in her quiet occupation of a shepherdess, would be led continually to brood over the political condition of her country, by the traditions of the past no less than by the mementoes of the local present.

M. Michelet, indeed, says that La Pucelle was *not* a shepherdess. I beg his pardon: she *was*. What he rests upon, I guess pretty well: it is the evidence of a woman called Haumette,[66] the most confidential friend of Joanna. Now, she is a good witness, and a good girl, and I like her; for she makes a natural and affectionate report of Joanna's ordinary life. But still, however good she may be as a witness, Joanna is better: and she, when speaking to the Dauphin, calls herself in the Latin report *Bergereta*.[67] Even Haumette confesses that Joanna tended sheep in her girlhood. And I believe, that, if Miss Haumette were taking coffee alone with me this very evening (February 12, 1847) – in which there would be no subject for scandal or for maiden blushes, because I am an intense philosopher, and Miss H. would be hard upon 450 years old – she would admit the following comment upon her evidence to be right. A Frenchman, about thirty years ago, M. Simond, in his *Travels*,[68] mentioned incidentally the following hideous scene as one steadily observed and watched by himself in France at a period some trifle before the French Revolution: – A peasant was ploughing; and the team that drew his plough was a donkey and a woman. Both were regularly harnessed: both pulled alike. This is bad enough: but the Frenchman adds – that, in distributing his lashes, the peasant was obviously desirous of being impartial: or, if either of the yoke-fellows had a right to complain, certainly it was not the donkey. Now, in any country, where such degradation of females could be tolerated by the state of manners, a woman of delicacy would shrink from acknowledging, either for herself or her friend, that she had ever been addicted to any mode of labour not strictly domestic; because, if once owning herself a praedial[69] servant, she would be

sensible that this confession extended by probability in the hearer's thoughts to having incurred indignities of this horrible kind. Haumette clearly thinks it more dignified for Joanna to have been darning the stockings[70] of her horny-hoofed father, Monsieur D'Arc, than keeping sheep, lest she might then be suspected of having ever done something worse. But, luckily, there was no danger of *that:* Joanna never was in service; and my opinion is that her father should have mended his own stockings, since probably he was the party to make the holes in them, as many a better man than D'Arc does; meaning by *that* not myself, because, though certainly a better man than D'Arc, I protest against doing anything of the kind. If I lived even with Friday in Juan Fernandez,[71] either Friday must do all the darning, or else it must go undone. The better men that I meant were the sailors in the British Navy, every man of whom mends his own stockings. Who else is to do it? Do you suppose, reader, that the junior lords of the Admiralty are under articles to darn for the Navy?

The reason, meantime, for my systematic hatred of D'Arc is this. There was a story current in France before the Revolution, framed to ridicule the pauper aristocracy, who happened to have long pedigrees and short rent rolls, viz., that a head of such a house, dating from the Crusades, was overheard saying to his son, a Chevalier of St Louis,[72] '*Chevalier, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*' Now, it is clearly made out by the surviving evidence, that D'Arc would much have preferred continuing to say – '*Ma fille, as-tu donné au cochon à manger?*' to saying '*Pucelle d'Orléans, as-tu sauvé les fleurs-de-lys?*'[73] There is an old English copy of verses which argues thus:

> 'If the man, that turnips cries,
> Cry not when his father dies –
> Then 'tis plain the man had rather
> Have a turnip than his father.'[74]

I cannot say that the logic of these verses was ever *entirely* to my satisfaction. I do not see my way through it as clearly as could be wished. But I see my way most clearly through D'Arc; and the result is – that he would greatly have preferred not merely a turnip to his father, but the saving a pound or so of bacon to saving the Oriflamme[75] of France.

It is probable (as M. Michelet suggests) that the title of Virgin, or *Pucelle*, had in itself, and apart from the miraculous stories about her, a secret power over the rude soldiery and partisan chiefs of that period;[76] for, in such a person, they saw a representative manifestation of the Virgin Mary, who, in a course of centuries, had grown steadily upon the popular heart.

As to Joanna's supernatural detection of the Dauphin (Charles VII.)[77] amongst three hundred lords and knights, I am surprised at the credulity which could ever lend itself to that theatrical juggle. Who admires more than myself the sublime enthusiasm, the rapturous faith in herself, of this pure creature? But I admire not stage artifices, which not *La Pucelle*, but the Court, must have arranged; nor can surrender myself a dupe to a conjuror's *leger-de-*

main,[78] such as may be seen every day for a shilling. Southey's 'Joan of Arc' was published in 1796.[79] Twenty years after, talking with Southey, I was surprised to find him still owning a secret bias in favour of Joan, founded on her detection of the Dauphin. The story, for the benefit of the reader new to the case, was this: – *La Pucelle* was first made known to the Dauphin, and presented to his Court, at Chinon: and here came her first trial. She was to find out the royal personage amongst the whole ark of clean and unclean creatures. Failing in this *coup d'essai*,[80] she would not simply disappoint many a beating heart in the glittering crowd that on different motives yearned for her success, but she would ruin herself – and, as the oracle within had told her, would ruin France. Our own sovereign lady Victoria rehearses annually a trial not so severe in degree, but the same in kind. She 'pricks' for sheriffs.[81] Joanna pricked for a king. But observe the difference: our own lady pricks for two men out of three; Joanna for one man out of three hundred. Happy Lady of the islands and the orient![82] – she *can* go astray in her choice only by one half; to the extent of one half she *must* have the satisfaction of being right. And yet, even with these tight limits to the misery of a boundless discretion, permit me, liege Lady, with all loyalty, to submit – that now and then you prick with your pin the wrong man. But the poor child from Domrémy, shrinking under the gaze of a dazzling court – not because dazzling (for in visions she had seen those that were more so), but because some of them wore a scoffing smile on their features – how should *she* throw her line into so deep a river to angle for a king, where many a gay creature was sporting that masqueraded as kings in dress? Nay, even more than any true king would have done: for, in Southey's version of the story, the Dauphin says, by way of trying the virgin's magnetic sympathy with royalty,

> ———'on the throne,
> I the while mingling with the menial throng,
> Some courtier shall be seated.'[83]

This usurper is even crowned: 'the jewell'd crown shines on a menial's head.'[84] But really, that is '*un peu fort;*'[85] and the mob of spectators might raise a scruple whether our friend the jackdaw upon the throne, and the Dauphin himself, were not grazing the shins of treason. For the Dauphin could not lend more than belonged to him. According to the popular notion, he had no crown for himself, but, at most, a *petit écu*[86] worth thirty pence; consequently none to lend, on any pretence whatever, until the consecrated Maid should take him to Rheims.[87] This was the *popular* notion in France. The same notion as to the indispensableness of a coronation prevails widely in England. But, certainly, it was the Dauphin's interest to support the popular notion, as he meant to use the services of Joanna. For, if he were king already, what was it that she could do for him beyond Orleans? And above all, it he were king without a coronation, and without the oil from the sacred ampulla,[88] what advantage was yet open to him by celerity above his competitor the English

boy?[89] Now was to be a race for a coronation: he that should win *that* race, carried the superstition of France along with him. Trouble us not, lawyer, with your quillets. We are illegal blockheads; so thoroughly without law, that we don't know even if we have a right to be blockheads; and our mind is made up – that the first man drawn from the oven of coronation at Rheims,[90] is the man that is baked into a king. All others are counterfeits, made of base Indian meal – damaged by sea-water.

(To be continued.)