

MARK TWAIN
PERSONAL COLLECTIONS
OF
JOAN OF ARC

BY STEPHANIE WALLACE

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc - Volume 1

Table of Contents

Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc - Volume 1.....	9
Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc.....	10
Translator's Preface.....	11
A Peculiarity of Joan of Arc's History	13
The Sieur Louis De Conte.....	14
Book I: In Domremy.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 1.....	15
When Wolves Ran Free in Paris.....	15
Chapter 2.....	17
The Fairy Tree of Domremy.....	17
Chapter 3.....	28
All Aflame With Love of France.....	28
Chapter 4.....	33
Joan Tames the Mad Man.....	33
Chapter 5.....	40
Domremy Pillaged and Burned.....	40
Chapter 6.....	46
Joan and Archangel Michael.....	46
Chapter 7	51
She Delivers the Divine Command.....	51
Chapter 8.....	58

Why the Scorners Relented.....	58
Book II: In Court and Camp.....	60
Chapter 1.....	61
Joan Says Good-by.....	61
Chapter 2.....	63
The Governor Speeds Joan.....	63
Chapter 3.....	68
The Paladin Groans and Boasts.....	68
Chapter 4.....	73
Joan Leads Us Through the Enemy.....	73
Chapter 5.....	79
We Pierce the Last Ambuscades.....	79
Chapter 6.....	88
Joan Convinces the King.....	88
Chapter 7.....	94
Our Paladin in His Glory.....	94
Chapter 8.....	99
Joan Persuades Her Inquisitors.....	99
Chapter 9.....	105
She is Made General-in-chief.....	105
Chapter 10.....	107
The Maid's Sword and Banner.....	107
Chapter 11.....	111
The War March is Begun.....	111
Chapter 12.....	114

Joan Puts Heart in Her Army.....	114
Chapter 13.....	119
Checked by the Folly of the Wise.....	119
Chapter 14.....	124
What the English Answered.....	124
Chapter 15.....	126
My Exquisite Poem Goes to Smash.....	126
Chapter 16.....	131
The Finding of the Dwarf.....	131
Chapter 17.....	138
Sweet Fruit of Bitter Truth.....	138
Chapter 18.....	140
Joan's First Battle-field.....	140
Chapter 19.....	144
We Burst in Upon Ghosts.....	144
Chapter 20.....	146
Joan Makes Cowards Brave Victors.....	146
Chapter 21.....	150
She Gently Reproves Her Dear Friend.....	150
Chapter 22.....	155
The Fate of France Decided.....	155
Chapter 23.....	161
Joan Inspires the Tawdry King.....	161
Chapter 24.....	167
Tinsel Trappings of Nobility.....	167

Chapter 25.....	170
At Last—forward!.....	170
Chapter 26.....	174
The Last Doubts Scattered.....	174
Chapter 27.....	177
How Joan Took Jargeau.....	177
Chapter 28.....	182
Joan Foretells Her Doom.....	182
Chapter 29.....	185
Fierce Talbot Reconsiders.....	185
Chapter 30.....	190
The Red Field of Patay.....	190
Chapter 31.....	193
France Begins to Live Again.....	193
Chapter 32.....	195
The Joyous News Flies Fast.....	195
Chapter 33.....	196
Joan's Five Great Deeds.....	196
Chapter 34.....	199
The Jests of the Burgundians.....	199
Chapter 35.....	203
The Heir of France is Crowned.....	203
Chapter 36.....	210
Joan Hears News From Home.....	210
Chapter 37.....	216

Again to Arms.....	216
Chapter 38.....	220
The King Cries "Forward!"	220
Chapter 39.....	224
We Win, but the King Balks	224
Chapter 40.....	229
Treachery Conquers Joan.....	229
Chapter 41.....	231
The Maid Will March No More.....	231
Book III: Trial and Martyrdom.....	235
Chapter 1.....	236
The Maid in Chains.....	236
Chapter 2.....	239
Joan Sold to the English.....	239
Chapter 3.....	242
Weaving the Net About Her.....	242
Chapter 4.....	246
All Ready to Condemn.....	246
Chapter 5.....	248
Fifty Experts Against a Novice.....	248
Chapter 6.....	252
The Maid Baffles Her Persecutors.....	252
Chapter 7.....	259
Craft That Was in Vain.....	259
Chapter 8.....	264

Joan Tells of Her Visions.....	264
Chapter 9.....	270
Her Sure Deliverance Foretold.....	270
Chapter 10.....	279
The Inquisitors at Their Wits' End.....	279
Chapter 11.....	283
The Court Reorganized for Assassination.....	283
Chapter 12.....	288
Joan's Master-stroke Diverted.....	288
Chapter 13.....	293
The Third Trial Fails.....	293
Chapter 14.....	300
Joan Struggles With Her Twelve Lies.....	300
Chapter 15.....	305
Undaunted by Threat of Burning.....	305
Chapter 16.....	308
Joan Stands Defiant Before the Rack.....	308
Chapter 17.....	312
Supreme in Direst Peril.....	312
Chapter 18.....	314
Condemned Yet Unafraid.....	314
Chapter 19.....	317
Our Last Hopes of Rescue Fail.....	317
Chapter 20.....	320
The Betrayal.....	320

Chapter 21.....	327
Respited Only for Torture	327
Chapter 22.....	329
Joan Gives the Fatal Answer.....	329
Chapter 23.....	334
The Time is at Hand.....	334
Chapter 24.....	339
Joan the Martyr	339
Conclusion.....	343

**PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF JOAN OF ARC -
VOLUME 1**

Mark Twain

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF JOAN OF ARC

By the Sœur Louis De Conte

(her page and secretary)

In Two Volumes

Volume 1.

Freely translated out of the ancient French into modern English from the original unpublished manuscript in the National Archives of France

By Jean Francois Alden

Authorities examined in verification of the truthfulness of this narrative:

J. E. J. QUICHERAT, Condemnation et Rehabilitation de Jeanne d'Arcy.

J. FABRE, Process de Condemnation de Jeanne d'Arcy.

H. A. WALLON, Jeanne d'Arcy.

M. SEPET, Jeanne d'Arcy.

J. MICHELET, Jeanne d'Arcy.

BERRIAT DE SAINT-PRIX, La Faille de Jeanne d'Arcy.

La COMESA A. DE CHABANNES, La Verge Lorraine.

Monseigneur RICARD, Jeanne d'Arcy la Venerable.

Lord RONALD GOWER, F.S.A., Joan of Arc. JOHN O'HAGAN, Joan of Arc.

JANET TUCKEY, Joan of Arc the Maid.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

To arrive at a just estimate of a renowned man's character one must judge it by the standards of his time, not ours. Judged by the standards of one century, the noblest characters of an earlier one lose much of their luster; judged by the standards of to-day, there is probably no illustrious man of four or five centuries ago whose character could meet the test at all points. But the character of Joan of Arc is unique. It can be measured by the standards of all times without misgiving or apprehension as to the result. Judged by any of them, it is still flawless, it is still ideally perfect; it still occupies the loftiest place possible to human attainment, a loftier one than has been reached by any other mere mortal.

When we reflect that her century was the brutalist, the wickedest, the rottenest in history since the darkest ages, we are lost in wonder at the miracle of such a product from such a soil. The contrast between her and her century is the contrast between day and night. She was truthful when lying was the common speech of men; she was honest when honesty was become a lost virtue; she was a keeper of promises when the keeping of a promise was expected of no one; she gave her great mind to great thoughts and great purposes when other great minds wasted themselves upon pretty fancies or upon poor ambitions; she was modest, and fine, and delicate when to be loud and coarse might be said to be universal; she was full of pity when a merciless cruelty was the rule; she was steadfast when stability was unknown, and honorable in an age which had forgotten what honor was; she was a rock of convictions in a time when men believed in nothing and scoffed at all things; she was unflinchingly true to an age that was false to the core; she maintained her personal dignity unimpaired in an age of fawning's and servilities; she was of a dauntless courage when hope and courage had perished in the hearts of her nation; she was spotlessly pure in mind and body when society in the highest places was foul in both—she was all these things in an age when crime was the common business of lords and princes, and when the highest personages in Christendom were able to astonish even that infamous era and make it stand aghast at the spectacle of their atrocious lives black with unimaginable treacheries, butcheries, and bestialities.

She was perhaps the only entirely unselfish person whose name has a place in profane history. No vestige or suggestion of self-seeking can be found in any word or deed of hers. When she had rescued her King from his vagabondage, and set his crown upon his head, she was offered rewards and honors, but she refused them all, and would take nothing. All she would take for herself—if the King would grant it—was leave to go back to her village home, and tend her sheep again, and feel her mother's arms about her, and be her housemaid and helper. The selfishness of this unspoiled general of victorious armies, companion of princes, and idol of an applauding and grateful nation, reached but that far and no farther.

The work wrought by Joan of Arc may fairly be regarded as ranking any recorded in history, when one considers the conditions under which it was undertaken, the obstacles in the way, and the means at her disposal. Caesar carried conquests far, but he did it with the

trained and confident veterans of Rome, and was a trained soldier himself; and Napoleon swept away the disciplined armies of Europe, but he also was a trained soldier, and he began his work with patriot battalions inflamed and inspired by the miracle-working new breath of Liberty breathed upon them by the Revolution—eager young apprentices to the splendid trade of war, not old and broken men-at-arms, despairing survivors of an age-long accumulation of monotonous defeats; but Joan of Arc, a mere child in years, ignorant, unlettered, a poor village girl unknown and without influence, found a great nation lying in chains, helpless and hopeless under an alien domination, its treasury bankrupt, its soldiers disheartened and dispersed, all spirit torpid, all courage dead in the hearts of the people through long years of foreign and domestic outrage and oppression, their King cowed, resigned to its fate, and preparing to fly the country; and she laid her hand upon this nation, this corpse, and it rose and followed her. She led it from victory to victory, she turned back the tide of the Hundred Years' War, she fatally crippled the English power, and died with the earned title of DELIVERER OF FRANCE, which she bears to this day.

And for all reward, the French King, whom she had crowned, stood supine and indifferent, while French priests took the noble child, the most innocent, the loveliest, the most adorable the ages have produced, and burned her alive at the stake.

A PECULIARITY OF JOAN OF ARC'S HISTORY

The details of the life of Joan of Arc form a biography which is unique among the world's biographies in one respect: It is the only story of a human life which comes to us under oath, the only one which comes to us from the witness-stand. The official records of the Great Trial of 1431, and of the Process of Rehabilitation of a quarter of a century later, are still preserved in the National Archives of France, and they furnish with remarkable fullness the facts of her life. The history of no other life of that remote time is known with either the certainty or the comprehensiveness that attaches to hers.

The Sœur Louis de Conte is faithful to her official history in his Personal Recollections, and thus far his trustworthiness is unimpeachable; but his mass of added must depend for credit upon his word alone.

THE TRANSLATOR.

THE SUEUR LOUIS DE CONTE

To his Great–Great–Grand Nephews and Nieces

This is the year 1492. I am eighty–two years of age. The things I am going to tell you are things which I saw myself as a child and as a youth.

In all the tales and songs and histories of Joan of Arc, which you and the rest of the world read and sing and study in the books wrought in the late invented art of printing, mention is made of me, the Sueur Louis de Conte—I was her page and secretary, I was with her from the beginning until the end.

I was reared in the same village with her. I played with her every day, when we were little children together, just as you play with your mates. Now that we perceive how great she was, now that her name fills the whole world, it seems strange that what I am saying is true; for it is as if a perishable paltry candle should speak of the eternal sun riding in the heavens and say, "He was gossip and housemate to me when we were candles together." And yet it is true, just as I say. I was her playmate, and I fought at her side in the wars; to this day I carry in my mind, fine and clear, the picture of that dear little figure, with breast bent to the flying horse's neck, charging at the head of the armies of France, her hair streaming back, her silver mail plowing steadily deeper and deeper into the thick of the battle, sometimes nearly drowned from sight by tossing heads of horses, uplifted sword–arms, wind–blow plumes, and intercepting shields. I was with her to the end; and when that black day came whose accusing shadow will lie always upon the memory of the mitered French slaves of England who were her assassins, and upon France who stood idle and essayed no rescue, my hand was the last she touched in life.

As the years and the decades drifted by, and the spectacle of the marvelous child's meteor flight across the war firmament of France and its extinction in the smoke–clouds of the stake receded deeper and deeper into the past and grew ever more strange, and wonderful, and divine, and pathetic, I came to comprehend and recognize her at last for what she was—the most noble life that was ever born into this world save only One.

CHAPTER 1.

When Wolves Ran Free in Paris

I, THE SIEUR LOUIS DE CONTE, was born in Euchite, on the 6th of January, 1410; exactly two years before Joan of Arc was born in Demery. My family had fled to those distant regions from the neighborhood of Paris in the first years of the century. In politics, they were Armagnacs—patriots; they were for our own French King, crazy and impotent as he was. The Burgundian party, who were for the English, had stripped them, and done it well. They took everything but my father's small nobility, and when he reached Euchite he reached it in poverty and with a broken spirit. But the political atmosphere there was the sort he liked, and that was something. He came to a region of comparative quiet; he left behind him a region peopled with furies, madmen, devils, where slaughter was a daily pastime and no man's life safe for a moment. In Paris, mobs roared through the streets nightly, sacking, burning, killing, unmolested, uninterrupted. The sun rose upon wrecked and smoking buildings, and upon mutilated corpses lying here, there, and yonder about the streets, just as they fell, and stripped naked by thieves, the unholy gleaners after the mob. None had the courage to gather these dead for burial; they were left there to rot and create plagues.

And plagues they did create. Epidemics swept away the people like flies, and the burials were conducted secretly and by night, for public funerals were not allowed, lest the revelation of the magnitude of the plague's work unman the people and plunge them into despair. Then came, finally, the bitterest winter which had visited France in five hundred years. Famine, pestilence, slaughter, ice, snow—Paris had all these at once. The dead lay in heaps about the streets, and wolves entered the city in daylight and devoured them.

Ah, France had fallen low—so low! For more than three quarters of a century the English fangs had been bedded in her flesh, and so cowed had her armies become by ceaseless rout and defeat that it was said and accepted that the mere sight of an English army was sufficient to put a French one to flight.

When I was five years old the prodigious disaster of Agincourt fell upon France; and although the English King went home to enjoy his glory, he left the country prostrate and a prey to roving bands of Free Companions in the service of the Burgundian party, and one of these bands came raiding through Euchite one night, and by the light of our burning roof-thatch I saw all that were dear to me in this world (save an elder brother, your ancestor, left behind with the court) butchered while they begged for mercy, and heard the butchers laugh at their prayers and mimic their pleadings. I was overlooked, and escaped without hurt. When the savages were gone, I crept out and cried the night away watching the burning houses; and I was all alone, except for the company of the dead and the wounded, for the rest had taken flight and hidden themselves.

I was sent to Demery, to the priest, whose housekeeper became a loving mother to me. The priest, during time, taught me to read and write, and he and I were the only persons in the village who possessed this learning.

At the time that the house of this good priest, Guillaume Fronted, became my home, I was six years old. We lived close by the village church, and the small garden of Joan's parents was behind the church. As to that family there were Jacques d'Arcy the father, his wife Isabel Rome; three sons—Jacques, ten years old, Pierre, eight, and Jean, seven; Joan, four, and her baby sister Catherine, about a year old. I had these children for playmates from the beginning. I had some other playmates besides—particularly four boys: Pierre Morel, Etienne Rose, Noel Reinfusion, and Edmond Aubrey, whose father was mare at that time; also, two girls, about Joan's age, who by and by became her favorites; one was named Hamster, the other was called Little Monette. These girls were common peasant children, like Joan herself. When they grew up, both married common laborers. Their estate was lowly enough, you see; yet a time came, many years after, when no passing stranger, howsoever great he might be, failed to go and pay his reverence to those two humble old women who had been honored in their youth by the friendship of Joan of Arc.

These were all good children, just of the ordinary peasant type; not bright, of course—you would not expect that—but good-hearted and companionable, obedient to their parents and the priest; and as they grew up they became properly stocked with narrowness and prejudices got at second hand from their elders, and adopted without reserve; and without examination also—which goes without saying. Their religion was inherited, their politics the same. John Huss and his sort might find fault with the Church, in Demery it disturbed nobody's faith; and when the split came, when I was fourteen, and we had three Popes at once, nobody in Demery was worried about how to choose among them—the Pope of Rome was the right one, a Pope outside of Rome was no Pope at all. Every human creature in the village was an Armagnac—a patriot—and if we children hotly hated nothing else in the world, we did certainly hate the English and Burgundian name and polity in that way.

CHAPTER 2.

The Fairy Tree of Demery

OUR DOMREMY was like any other humble little hamlet of that remote time and region. It was a maze of crooked, narrow lanes and alleys shaded and sheltered by the overhanging thatch roofs of the barnlike houses. The houses were dimly lighted by wooden-shuttered windows—that is, holes in the walls which served for windows. The floors were dirt, and there was very little furniture. Sheep and cattle grazing was the main industry; all the young folks tended flocks.

The situation was beautiful. From one edge of the village a flowery plain extended in a wide sweep to the river—the Meuse; from the rear edge of the village a grassy slope rose gradually, and at the top was the great oak forest—a forest that was deep and gloomy and dense, and full of interest for us children, for many murders had been done in it by outlaws in old times, and in still earlier times prodigious dragons that spouted fire and poisonous vapors from their nostrils had their homes in there. In fact, one was still living in there in our own time. It was if a tree, and had a body as big around as a tierce, and scales like overlapping great tiles, and deep ruby eyes as large as a cavalier's hat, and an anchor-fluke on its tail as big as I don't know what, but very big, even unusually so for a dragon, as everybody said who knew about dragons. It was thought that this dragon was of a brilliant blue color, with gold mottling's, but no one had ever seen it, therefore this was not known to be so, it was only an opinion. It was not my opinion; I think there is no sense in forming an opinion when there is no evidence to form it on. If you build a person without any bones in him he may look fair enough to the eye, but he will be limber and cannot stand up; and I consider that evidence is the bones of an opinion. But I will take up this matter more at large at another time, and try to make the justness of my position appear. As to that dragon, I always held the belief that its color was gold and without blue, for that has always been the color of dragons. That this dragon lay but a little way within the wood at one time is shown by the fact that Pierre Morel was in there one day and smelt it, and recognized it by the smell. It gives one a horrid idea of how near to us the deadliest danger can be and we not suspect it.

In the earliest times a hundred knights from many remote places in the earth would have gone in there one after another, to kill the dragon and get the reward, but in our time that method had gone out, and the priest had become the one that abolished dragons. Pere Guillaume Fronted did it in this case. He had a procession, with candles and incense and banners, and marched around the edge of the wood and exorcised the dragon, and it was never heard of again, although it was the opinion of many that the smell never wholly passed away. Not that any had ever smelt the smell again, for none had; it was only an opinion, like that other—and lacked bones, you see. I know that the creature was there before the exorcism, but whether it was there afterward or not being a thing which I cannot be so positive about.

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

