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Personal recollections of Joan of Arc

Mark Twain

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Book Two: In Court and Camp Book Two begins with the elimination of Joan’s hindrances. With support from her Visions, Joan leaves the village at age 17 to request control of the army from the king. In Chapter IX, after Joan successfully defends herself in trial for witchcraft, the King appoints Joan "General-in-Chief of armies." In Chapter X, Joan begins to organize her campaign, writing a letter to the English commanders at Orleans, demanding them to vacate France. The English refuse, and Joan attacks immediately and frankly despite the generals and counselors advice that France remain on the defensive. Through this aggressive military campaign, Joan secures several victories over the English. On July 5, the English forces surrender at Rheims, allowing the Bloodless March and Coronation of Charles to take place. During the coronation, Joan asked the King to remit taxes on Domremy. After the coronation, Joan requested permission to attack Paris, saying that the move would cripple the English forces. The King's wicked counselors, however, oppose her in the attempt. The King initially grants Joan permission to attack, but just as Joan is on the verge of victory, the King announces a long-term truce with Paris, which indicates a ceasefire. Joan and de Conte are upset at the lost opportunity. The final chapter relates the events of May 24, 1430, in which Joan and the French lost a battle to the English and Burgundian troops, resulting in Joan's capture. Throughout Book 2, de Conte speaks of Joan's virtue (bans prostitution, gambling, and profanity in the army; requires that each man attend church; and shows mercy towards English prisoners) as well as Joan's divine powers (recognizes the king without notice, finds a hidden sword in the church, foresees war-wounds and her upcoming death).

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