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Excerpt from Trial of Joan of Arc, W.S. Scott, from Orleans Manuscript, Folio Society, Inc., 1959

When Joan, a young girl, had visitations of the means to save France and make Charles, the Dauphin, king, she went to the local priest. At first, he was suspicious of her, for the poor and those suffering from malnutrition frequently have visitations. And, actually, how was he to know whether the visit was from God or from the Devil, especially since this was a young woman? Eventually she was taken to the Dauphin and examined by his theologians as to her faith. They finally decided that her prophecies were of God and gave her a man's uniform and a sword to lead the troops. In accounts of her feats, his author expresses surprise at her ready ability to fight, wear armor, and to handle a sword.

Joan succeeded in having Charles crowned at Reims and in taking much of France back from the English. But when she was captured by a nobleman, no efforts were made by the new French king to assist her. It would seem that the "favor" could not be tolerated once the victory had been achieved. After all, Joan of Arc might not have been willing to return to shepherding the flocks. A woman with such powers as her was highly dangerous.

The English proceeded to examine her. One Englishman tried to rape her. The other told her that she could prove herself if she would wear women's clothing. (Who but a witch would dare to wear men's clothing?) But when she asked for her dress, the jailors did not give it to her. Eventually the theologians convicted her and had her burned.

Once she was dead, a trial of rehabilitation was held, and the new Joan of Arc is known throughout the Church as St. Joan. Yet it is worth noting that the confession released by the Inquisitors and exacted as the grounds for burning Joan referred only to her as usurping the powers of the male Church hierarchy.

*I Jeanne, called the Pucell, a miserable sinner, after I recognized the snare of error in which I was held; and now that I have, by God's grace, returned to our Mother Holy Church, in order that it may be apparent that not feignedly but with good heart and will I have returned to her; I do confess that I have grievously sinned, in falsely pretending that I have had revelations from God and his angels, St. Catherine and St. Margaret, etc.*

*And all my words and deeds which are contrary to the Church, I do rescind, and I desire to live in unity with the Church, nevermore departing therefrom.*

In witness whereof my sign manual.

Signed Jhenne