

## MEDICINE

# How Diseases Have Ruled the World

By JANE STAFFORD

**J**OAN OF ARC never grew up. If she had her entire career would have been different. She would not have saved France. She would probably not have been burned at the stake. She would not have become a saint herself. This theory has been advanced in explanation of the Maid of Orleans by an Australian physician, Dr. C. MacLaurin, who has studied her life from a medical viewpoint.

The girl saint was never more than a child, Dr. MacLaurin concluded from his study of the records. Even at the time of her tragic death she was not really 19 or 20, but only about 12 or 13 in physical and mental development. It was her very immaturity that caused her to see visions, and to believe them so fervently that she was led to succor France and to martyr herself.

If she had matured as most girls do and her ductless glands had developed and functioned normally, she would probably have become a peasant's wife, mother of a family and would have died in her bed instead of perishing in the flames. She would never have gone to the aid of France and her weak vacillating dauphin, later King Charles VII.

Joan first heard her Voices—those saints' Voices which inspired and directed her whole short life—when she was about thirteen years old, just when she should have begun to mature. A little later she was informed by these Voices that she was to remain a virgin. This idea was probably growing in her mind from the time when she first realized that she was not to be like other women.

## Peculiarities of Body and Mind

The proof that Joan did not mature is found by Dr. MacLaurin in various contemporary accounts, particularly in the reports of the women who attended her and of her steward and loyal follower, Jean d'Aulon.

The peculiarities of her body were responsible for the peculiarities of her mind, Dr. MacLaurin explains. The psychic changes accompanying physical maturity lead normal people into love and marriage. They led Joan into furious religious zeal and extreme



## THE FRENCH HEROINE

*Not as artist and legend portray her, but as scientific studies say she must have appeared*

Puritanism. Psychiatrists say that Puritanism, religious fervor and the militant spirit of reform which is its modern counterpart are often the expressions of repressed, unsatisfied instincts.

In Joan's day there were no psychiatrists to give a scientific explanation of her Voices and hallucinations. They were considered either divine or demonic, miraculous or magical, according to whether you believed her the Maid of God or a witch. She believed in them devoutly, but at the very end common sense reasserted itself and she realized, too late, the truth, Dr. MacLaurin thinks.

Her very answers at her trial for her life are child-like and show only the simple cunning of a child, rather than the inspired cleverness which some have attributed to them, the Australian doctor says. She seems to him to have been a direct, simple, superstitious child. At the end, she was swayed by very human fear, though her physical and moral courage during the greater part of her life were remarkable.

Her Puritanism showed itself in various ways. She would not tolerate any women around the army camps. She

herself wore men's clothing in order to be less attractive to the soldiers. This gives us a clue as to how she looked. She must have had a boyish, undeveloped figure, otherwise the masculine attire would have had quite the opposite effect from the one she desired. A normal peasant girl of Joan's time would have only emphasized her sex by appearing in men's clothing.

## Hardening of the Arteries

Just as the physical abnormalities of this one girl changed the face of history, so physical abnormalities or disease in other men and women of the past have had their share in making the world's history, and still are affecting the destinies of nations and their peoples.

A very common condition which has played a big part in directing the world's affairs is hardening of the arteries, known medically as arteriosclerosis. Its frequent companions are high blood pressure, chronic Bright's disease and gout. This combination of diseases afflicted Charles V of Spain, Holy Roman Emperor, under whose reign Cortes made his famous conquests in America and Magellan voyaged round the world.

Charles V was a glamorous hero, and has been called the greatest figure in Europe between Charlemagne and Napoleon, but he ate himself to death. He was a brilliant military leader and a great statesman. At one time he held control over most of Europe and all of America then known to the white man. However, he took no care of himself, but "went roaring and fighting and guzzling and drinking all over Europe." The strain was more than his arteries could stand. At the age of 56 he was obliged to relinquish all his power and abdicate, much to the distress and misfortune of the world.

"When we consider that the destinies of nations are commonly held in the hands of elderly gentlemen whose blood pressures tend to be too high owing to their fierce political activities, it is not too much to say that arteriosclerosis is one of the greatest tragedies that afflicts the human race," Dr. MacLaurin declares.

The irascibility, unreasonable prejudices, and fits of depression which accompany high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis, gout or Bright's disease often make life miserable for the families and employees of the modern business man or politician who suffers from them. They made it even harder for the subjects of a medieval absolute monarch so afflicted.

Philip, Charles' son, who succeeded him, led a most abstemious life, but suffered from the sins of his father. Insurance companies know that children of men who have had either arteriosclerosis, chronic Bright's disease or gout are more likely to suffer from one of these diseases or a combination of them. Philip drank and ate moderately but he worked hard, driven by a relentless conscience, and he took no exercise. His care of himself enabled him to live 20 years longer than his brilliant father had, but he died of the same diseases complicated by diabetic gangrene, a frequent accompaniment of them.

Twenty years less of Philip, with his bitter religious persecutions, and twenty years more of his father might have made a vast difference to Europe. There would probably have been no Spanish Armada, no revolt of the Netherlands. Charles understood this latter country, but his son did not. An extra twinge of gout may have made Philip refuse the Dutch envoys' requests for more tolerant rule.

Another very common disease of modern times had just made its appearance in Europe during the romantic youth of Henry VIII, England's bluff King Hal of the many wives. This gay young Prince's adventures make entertaining reading, but they laid the seeds of disaster for himself, his family and many of his subjects. Syphilis probably attacked the king during his youth. If it did, it explains his subsequent conduct, including the numerous wives and the poor health and early deaths of all but one of his children.

#### Why Henry VIII's Wives

This ailment is more than a disease of skin and bone, and general paralysis or paresis is not its only nervous result. Among neurotic people it may cause serious mental trouble, although not affecting the actual brain tissue, so far as can be seen with the microscope. Phobias and obsessions, poor mental balance, and degeneracy result from syphilis. From all of these Henry VIII seems to have suffered. How else can one explain his brutal treatment of

wives and subjects, his many tyrannical acts, his changed appearance?

It was probably because of the very disease from which he suffered that Henry had so many wives. It is characteristic of that disease that its victims often have exaggerated sexual desires. This coupled with his wish to have a son and heir led him on from wife to wife. He might have had the son by the first wife if it had not been for his disease which he transmitted to her. While Mary Tudor was the only child

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## YOUR LIFE TODAY

has been mapped

by Maladies of Dead People



**If Martin Luther had not suffered from ear disease, would there have been a Reformation?**

**If Joan of Arc's glands had developed like those of normal girls, would she have saved France?**

**If mighty Charles V had not lived at high tension like many modern business men, would Europe be divided into countries as that continent is today?**

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of Henry and Catherine of Aragon who lived, they had a number of sons born dead or who died a few days after birth, all probably as a result of their father's disease.

Mary Tudor, his daughter, the Bloody Mary of history, probably suffered from inherited syphilis. The wizened, lined and prematurely aged face seen in her portrait is typically the face of a sufferer of delayed hereditary syphilis. She died suddenly, and if the inherited disease had affected her heart, this might explain the sudden death. However, she was a sickly child and never was well during her whole short life.

Elizabeth seems to have been the only healthy child of Henry VIII. Not only was she healthy enough to live to nearly 70 years of age, but she probably did not have the various physiological abnormalities that have been attributed to her. It is Dr. MacLaurin's opinion, after considering all these

stories from a strict medical viewpoint, that there is nothing to them. She was probably a fairly normal and healthy woman. A slight imbalance of her ductless glands would explain the masculine characteristics which have given rise to so much speculation.

The curse of the Tudors which so afflicted all England for nearly 100 years was probably the same disease that attacked Ivan the Terrible of Russia. In Ivan the disease went much further with much more disastrous results than in Henry VIII. Ivan started out as a brute and ended in being what we would today call criminally insane. There seems little doubt, judging from his acts and his letters, that Ivan's insanity was the result of syphilis.

#### Luther's Rare Disease

A quite different and much rarer disease was the famous devil of Martin Luther. This remarkable man, who had such an immense influence on the world's development, believed that he was actually haunted by the devil himself. He could hear the fiend roar and whistle in his ears. He felt him grip his heart. At times the devil made him so dizzy that he fell from his work stool, Luther said. On one occasion, Luther became so enraged he threw an inkwell at this tormenting fiend.

Actually the poor man undoubtedly suffered from Ménière's disease. This is a disease of the middle ear which occasionally attacks middle-aged and gouty people. The victim suffers from dreadful noises in the head and terrible giddiness. Luther also was afflicted with earaches, discharge from the ears and deafness, so there is little doubt that his head noises were due to ear disease and were not hallucinations.

Did Charles I of England lose his head because he was a stammerer? This is the interesting conclusion that may be drawn from studying his tragic life from a medical viewpoint.

The wistful expression seen in his portrait indicates that he never outgrew the baby fear and nervousness which probably made him a stammerer. At the very last, his youthful handicap may have prevented him from speech that would have saved his life. During his trial he is reported to have said brokenly, "They will not suffer me to speak." Dr. MacLaurin suggests that during that dreadful moment the old bad habit of his childish days returned so that he actually could not speak for the time.

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