

Picardy Birthplace of the French Nation

The battle in which the Allies and the central powers are engaged in northeastern France often is referred to in the dispatches as the "Battle of Picardy," although as a political subdivision the province of Picardy no longer exists. Since the division into departments was made, Picardy was cut up into the departments of the Somme, Pas-de-Calais, Aisne and Oise, says the Kansas City Star. In the ancient days when it existed as one of the great historic provinces of France its boundaries extended from Hamant and Artois on the north and from Champagne on the east to the province of Normandy and the English channel on the west, with maritime frontier running from the mouth of the Aa to the cliffs of Caux, and it included within its boundaries the whole of the basin of the Somme river and a great part of that of the Oise.

Under the Romans it was inhabited by the Morini, the Ambiani, the Veromandi, the Bellovaci and the Suessiones, whose names are still preserved in the modern cities of Amiens, Vermandois, Beauvais and Soissons. It was a battle ground in Caesar's day and the Romans built military roads through the province and erected defensive citadels along the banks of the Somme.

It was in Picardy, too, that the first nucleation of France as a nation took place, under the Merovingian kings in the fifth century. "The history of ancient France," says Michielet, "had its sources in Picardy." Here Clovis made his first capital at Soissons and Charlemagne founded his at Noyon. Famous battles were fought within its borders long before the first Prussian set foot upon its soil. Crecy, where Edward the Black Prince won his spurs, and Agincourt, where Henry of England, with his bowmen, wrought such havoc with the French army—the bowmen whose spirits were said to have rendered miraculous assistance to the allies at the battle of the Marne.

A Land of Beautiful Landscapes.

A land of beautiful landscapes is the land of Picardy—or was before the devastating Hun plowed up its fair fields, tore up its roads and laid low its forests and its famous avenues of aspens and poplars—as "Picturesque Picardy" it was known to poets and artists and writers and travelers. David Murray, the famous Scottish landscape painter, gave its pastoral beauties to the world in almost three score of his canvases. Many of Carot's finest landscapes are laid in its valleys of the Oise or Somme. Ruskin and Robert Louis Stevenson have glorified it in art and literature. But today it is a scene of ruin, ravage and desolation. Many of its age-old towns have been made its level with the plain; some of its historic cathedrals and chateaux are

heaps of ruins and great craters of shell holes mark the face of the land. As Lord Byron said of Greece, "Tis Picardy, but living Picardy no more."

And now again the guns of the Huns are thundering in the heart of Picardy and at the gates of its ancient capital, Amiens, the beautiful, the Venice of Picardy, home of rare art treasures and city of the cathedral which has been named by the Picards themselves the "Cathedral of the Beautiful God," and by art lovers the "Parthenon of Gothic Architecture." Will the fate of Rheims and of Arras be meted out to Amiens and to its famous cathedral?

The cathedral of Amiens is one of the largest churches in the world, being surpassed in the magnitude of its construction only by St. Peter's at Rome, St. Sophia's at Constantinople and the cathedral of Cologne. Into its sculptured stones and statues have been wrought by its builders almost a complete Biblical history, both of the Old and New Testaments. Ruskin calls the cathedral "The Bible of Amiens," and in his lecture under that title he has given an interpretation of its thousands of sculptured figures and of its manifold "sermons in stones."

The cathedral was built chiefly between 1220 and 1288. Its architect was Robert de Luzarches. It consists of a nave nearly 140 feet high, with aisles and lateral chapels, a transept with aisles, and a choir ending in an apse surrounded by chapels. The total length is 469 feet, its breadth 216 feet. The facade, which is flanked by two square towers without spires, has three portals decorated with a profusion of statuary, and over the central portal is the remarkable statue of Christ, of the thirteenth century, which has given to this entrance the name of the "Porch of the Beautiful God." Surmounting the portals are two galleries and above these a fine rose window.

Wood That Leaps Like Living Flame.

Ruskin went into raptures over the wood carvings of the choir. "Whatever you wish to see, or are forced to leave unseen, at Amiens," he said, "if the overwhelming possibilities of your existence and the inevitable necessities of precipitate locomotion in their fulfillment have left you so much as one-quarter of an hour, not out of breath of the contemplation of the capital of Picardy, give it wholly to the cathedral choir. Aisles and porches, lancet windows and roses, you can see elsewhere as well as here—but such carpenter's work you can not. It is lately developed flamboyant just past the fifteenth century, and has some Flemish stolidity mixed with the playing French fire of it; but wood carving was the Picardy's joy from his youth up, and so far as I know, there is nothing else so beautiful cut out of the goodly trees of the world. Sweet and young grained wood it is; oak trained and chosen for such work, sound now as 400 years since. Under the carver's hand it seems to cut like clay, to fold like silk, to grow like living flame. Canopy crowning canopy, pinnacle piercing pinnacle—it shoots and wreathes itself into an enchanted glade, inextricable, imperishable, fuller of leafage than any forest and fuller of story than any book."

Ruskin notes that the dominant tone of the sculptures that so profusely decorate the cathedral is that of Peace and Mercy, and of the famous Christ—the "beautiful God"—over the central portal, he writes: "Throughout the sermon on this Amiens mount, Christ never appears as the crucified, or is for a moment thought of as the incarnate word; as the present friend, and as the everlasting king in Heaven. What

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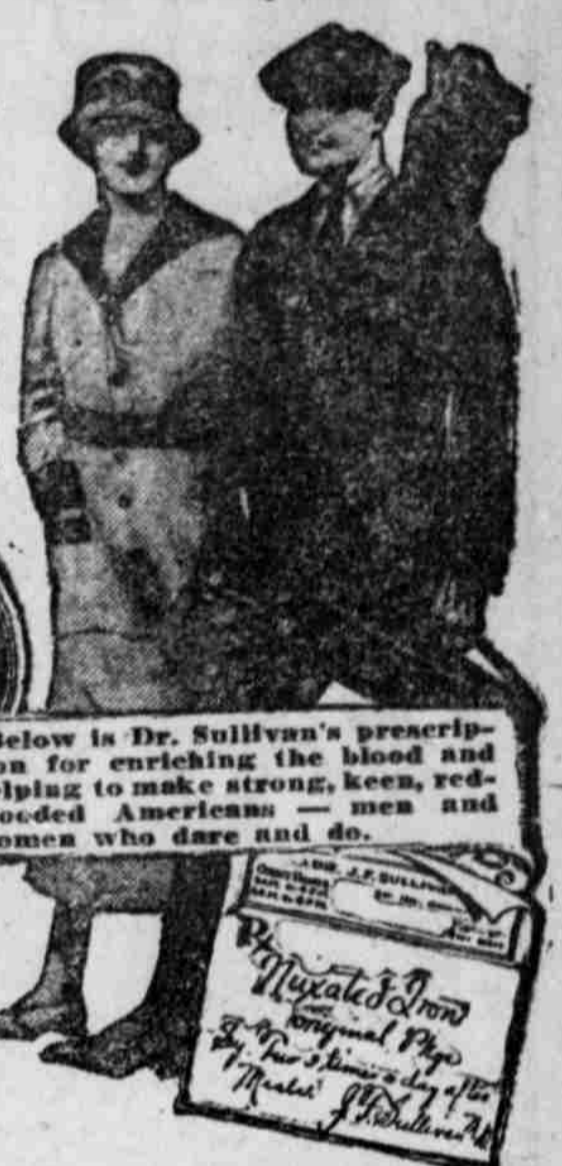
Dr. Ferdinand King, a New York Physician and Medical Author, when interviewed on this subject, said: "There can be no sturdy iron men without iron. Pallor means anaemia. Anaemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anaemic men and women is pale; the flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails and often they become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks."

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Dr. James Francis Sullivan, formerly Physician of Bellevue Hospital (Out-Door Dept.), New York, and the Westchester County Hospital, says: "In my talks to physicians I have strongly emphasized the great necessity of their making blood examinations of their weak, anaemic, run-down patients. Thousands of persons go on suffering year after year, doctoring themselves for all kinds of ills, when the real and true cause underlying their condition is simply a lack of sufficient iron in the red blood corpuscles to enable nature to transform the food they eat into brawn, muscle tissue and brain. But beware of the old forms of metallic iron which frequently do more harm than good."

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His life is, what His commands are and what His judgments will be, are the things here taught; not what He once did, nor what He once suffered, but what He is doing now, and what He requires us to do. * * * Keeping, then, these things in your heart, look back now to the central statue of Christ, and hear His message with understanding. He holds the book of the eternal law in His left hand; with His right he blesses, blesses, but blesses on condition. "This do and thou shalt live," say, in stricter and more piercing sense, this be and thou shalt live; to show mercy is nothing—thy soul must be full of mercy; to be pure in act is nothing—thou shalt be pure in heart also."

Who Built It?

Summing up his interpretation of the Amiens cathedral, the "Bible of Amiens," Ruskin asks:


"Who built it, shall we ask? God and man is the first true answer. The stars in their courses built it, and the nations. Greek Athena labors here, and the Roman Father Jove, and Guardian Mars. The Gaul labors here and the Frank; knightly Norman, mighty Ostrogoth, and wasted anchorite of Idumea. The actual man who built it scarcely cared to tell you he did so; nor do the historians brag of him. Any quantity of heraldries of knaves and faineants you may find in what they call their history; but this is prob-

ably the first time you ever read the name of Robert of Luzarches. I say he 'scarcely cared;' we are not sure that he cared at all. He signed his name nowhere, that I can hear of. You may perhaps find some recent initials cut by English remarkable visitors desirous of immortality, here and there about the edifice, but Robert the builder, or at least the master of that building, cut his on no stone of it."

JULIET V. STRAUSS

(The Country Contributor.)

A plain woman; a simple life,
And ever a humble heart.
A hard road, and a noble strife,
And always her honest part.
Far-reaching voice and ringing-true,
And ever an eagle mind.
The lowly folk of earth she knew,
And reckoned herself their kind.
And theirs is the grief for her today,
And theirs is the eager ear
That listens in vain along the way
For the voice that brought such cheer.
A plain woman and a simple life,
Making smooth the road men trod,
Lightening their woes, lessening
their strife,
And pointing the way to God.
May 24, 1918.
—George Bicknell.



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