



Fatherland of Alfred de Vigny, Loches rises on banks of Indre. The central part of the city preserved its aspect of the Middle Ages: strengthened a "city" reduced to two of its three primitive enclosures crowns the city. Its historical, military and archaeological interest is of first order.

A spot of history.

Loches appears in the history in the middle of the 5th century with the construction of a church in the "vicus" (village) of "Luccas" by the Bishop Eustace de Tours. These facts are reported by the Bishop Gregoire, one of his successors, in his "History of the Franks". In 742, the Mayors of the Palace, Carloman and Pépin (future king of the Franks from 751 to 768 and knew under the name of Pépin the Brief) fought battle against Humbold, Duke of Aquitanian and seized Loches. "Luccas" from now on was indicated by the term of "castrum" (castle).

The ceaseless quarrels which opposed the counts of Blois to the counts of Anjou from the very start of Xth century, were at the origin of the rise of the castle of Loches which played from now on a dominating part in this fight of being able. The angevin Geoffroi Grisegonelle rebuilds a new church at the end of Xth century, while his son the turbulent Baron Foulques III Nerra (987-1040) made build between the 1013 and 1035 enormous quadrangular keep always visible nowadays. This keep formed part of a network of fortifications encircling the town of Tours, object of all his covetousnesses. It is his son, Geoffroi II Martel (1040-1060), which carried out in the long term opens it paternal: Touraine became angevine in 1044.

A prison of State.

When, Henri II Plantagenêt, the lords of Anjou go up on the throne of England, defenses of the castle are still developed. After the death of Henri II, while Richard Lion Heart, on his return of crusade, is retained prisoner in Austria, Philippe Auguste intrigues with Jean Sans Terre (Sans Terre means without ground), the brother of Richard, and is made give Loches. As soon as it is released, impetuous Lion Heart runs: the castle is removed by surprised in three hours. This military operation, almost magic, defrayed the chronicles a long time. Ten years after, in 1205, Philippe Auguste takes his revenge, but with less brilliance: the seat lasts one year. Loches is from now on prison of State and the kings endeavour to make it impregnable.

Loches did not leave any more the crown of France. The city and its castle remained with the hands of Valois, and that even at the darkest hours of the One hundred Year old War. The Dolphin Charles (future Charles VII) did of it one of his residences preferred with Chinon. It continued there the installation of a home undoubtedly started under Charles V after the victory of Orleans, it is there that the Virgin came once again tancer undecided King de Bourges to go to be made crown in Reims.



Charles VII

Agnès Sorel.

In XVème century, a smile comes to brighten it murky story of the castle. Agnes Sorel, the "Dame de Beauté", Charles VII's favorite, comes to live in Loches. She gives up the court of Chinon, where the Dolphin (future Louis XI) caused thousand difficulties to her and was even let go to some "promptitude" - this euphemism indicating a slap.



It is among the young ladies of honor of the Queen that the King distinguished, he will remain always enthusiast about her. Couples rather badly matched Agnès whom charm, King of poor mine. Favorite, the "piteous one towards all people", will have a great action on Charles VII. Her councils will be often happy, but her taste of the ostentation, which a great benevolence corrects, will weigh heavily on thin finances of the kingdom.

To be buried in the collegial one, Agnès Sorel filled generousities the Chapter. After its death, the canons opinion themselves that the presence, in holy place, of a notorious pecheress misses construction, They ask to Louis XI that one transport the remainders to the castle. The old fox accepts, but in the condition that the donations follow the same way. The scruples of the religious assembly fly away.

Cages of Louis XI (end of the 15th C.).

By visiting the keep, you will be able to see dungeons and fitted latticework on cells, and counterparts of the cages that Louis XI was fond of for his prisoners. They were made of covered an iron wood lattice. Most comfortable measured 2 meters on all the faces. But there was a model more flattened, of a wild refinement, where the prisoner could only be held lying or sitted. According to the legend, the prisoner never left there. It seems however that the cages served especially during the night, or for the transport of the prisoners. An additional refinement consisted in suspending the cages with the vault of the dungeon. These "monuments of tyranny" were destroyed in 1790 by the inhabitants of Loches.

Agnès Sorel Tower.

Known as of XVIème century under the name of "tower of the Beautiful-Agnes", it sheltered, of 1809 to 1970, the tomb of Agnes Sorel.

Logis Royaux.

Terrace where you will admire the beautiful sight on Loches and the valley of Indre, one notices that the building includes two parts built at different times. Oldest and highest shows the need for safety of the strong castles: four turrets are committed in the wall and a covered way connects them, at the base of the roof. This old home, is prolonged under Charles VIII and Louis XII by a residence of approval: the New Home, in which appear the tastes of the Renaissance.



On the 1st floor of the New Home. One sees the small oratory of Anne of Brittany, finely worked, decorated with the Breton hermine and the cordelière of François Saint the platform facing the furnace bridge sheltered the royal seat and only the door on the right of the furnace bridge existed.

In the 2nd room, one notices a very interesting triptych of the school of Jean Fouquet (15th C.), coming from the church St Antoine: Crucifixion, Portement de Croix, Deposition.

The lying one of Agnes Sorel, placed in the room known as of Charles VIII, captive then the attention of the visitor. During the Revolution, soldiers of the battalions of Indre, whose historical knowledge was not with the height of their revolutionary zeal, took the favorite one for holy, gashed its statue, profaned her tomb and dispersed her remainders.

The alabaster monument was restored in Paris under the First Empire then in 1970 at the time of its transfer in the New Home. Agnes is lying the head supported by two angels. In the same room, you will admire a portrait of "Damoyselle de Beauté".

In the Old Home which makes continuation, you will visit the large room with the vast fire place where June the 3, and 5 1429, Jeanne d' Arc pressed Charles VII to go to Reims. She was accompanied by Rohert Le Masson, Dunois and Gilles de Rais, the walls are decorated "greenery" of the XVIIth century.

In the last room, known as room of withdrawal of Charles VII, are exposed the copy of the manuscript of the lawsuit of Jeanne d' Arc (1431) and a tapestry of XVIth century, Musica.

The keep.

It forms with its appendices, the round tower and Martelet, an imposing strengthened unit.

The city of Loches, vulnerable to the South, had, to defend itself, raise at the end of XIth century (see higher), a powerful keep supported by cylindrical buttresses half.

At the outside of the keep of the holes of putlog-holes still mark the site of the hours; on the left of the entry, in the dungeon of Philippe de Commines, one can see a yoke of 16 kg.

The floors of the three stages disappeared but one sees on the walls three more series of fireplaces which make it possible to reconstitute them by imagination. Top of the keep which you will reach by a long staircase, you will have the reward of a superb sight.

The round Tower.

Built in the XVth century, like Martelet, to supplement the fortifications of this point where met the general enclosure of the castle, that of the keep and that of the city.

This round tower, known as tower of Louis XI, includes four superimposed rooms. Below the room of the Question is an arched dungeon where the cardinal La Balue would have locked up. Son of a poitevin tailor, he entered the orders and became one of the advisers of Louis XI. He betrays his Master with the profit of Charles Le Téméraire and was uncovered. The legend wants that he is remained eleven years locked up in one of the "cages" of Loches which one allots the invention to him.

The Martelet.

It is in this construction primarily made up by several stages of undergrounds that are the most impressive dungeons. The first is that of Ludovic Le More, Duke of Milan, captured by Louis XII. He expiated during eight years, in Loches, his roueries and his treacheries. The day of his release, the sunlight was too sharp, freedom recovered too graying and he died on the spot. Ludovic, which was the guard of Léonard de Vinci, covered its dungeon of paintings and inscriptions. At star side, of couleuvrines and heaumes, one raises these words which, in a similar place, will not surprise anybody: "that who is not pleased".

Below is, enlightened by a ray of light, the dungeon where the bishops of Autun and Puy, compromised in the rebellion of the constable of Bourbon, had any leisure to dig in the wall a

small furnace bridge and a way of cross symbolic system. Here one was also locked up their accomplices, the count of St-Vallier, father of Diane of Poitiers. Condemned to death, it was on the intervention of his daughter and accepted the opinion from them on the scaffold even.

Around the dungeons old underground galleries of careers in XIIIth century they open served the shelters, small works strengthened which flanked the ramparts.