

especially her art. The latter, though lacking the originality, exuberance, and sensuous grace, of the Hellenic art, yet excels it in one particular, its spirit of universality, which marks the whole Roman civilization. Rome's part in the human drama, assigned to it by the hand of heaven, was different but not less important than that of Greece. After Greek culture had purged the minds and hearts of men from the honors of eastern corruption, Rome was to gather the whole human family into one common fold, and thus prepare it for the fulfilment of the promise laid down in the sacred text of the Jews. The task was a gigantic one, but what is ordained in the eternal councils of heaven, becomes easy even to the weak arm of man. Thus, when the Roman conquest was accomplished, a hush of universal peace spread over the earth, and amid the silent expectation of the nations the word of God was ushered into the world. To the suffering millions, to the slave, to the child, to woman, it was the word of love, liberty, and brotherhood, and their hearts rebounded at its magic touch.

Still, it had to conquer its ground, against the allied powers of the whole pagan world. And hardly had the peaceful subjugation of that world by the gospel been accomplished, when another catastrophe threatened the newly established kingdom of heaven. The sons of the northern forest, allured by the easy spoils, swept down upon the effete south and the civilization of the Greek and the Roman were engulfed in one common ruin.

Thus barbarism sat triumphant upon the tomb of ancient art. Was the latter never to rise from its fall? Most assuredly, ladies and gentlemen, for in the ruins of ancient Rome were sowed the seeds of that new Christian civilization, which, phoenix-like, was to rise from its ashes. And from its bosom a new art was to spring fairer and nobler than all its predecessors, for it was adorned with those blossoms of celestial fragrance, Christian love, and Christian purity, which the ancient mind was not able to conceive. Long was its struggle for existence, for the fierce northern heart had first to be attuned to its sway by the benign influence of that new Christian faith with its new laws and new ideals. Moreover art is a flower so frail and tender that it withers

under the blast of turmoil and strife, and blossoms only under the gentle breath of peace and tranquility. But when at last the muse again assumed her lyre, her song was changed,—it had lost its old polished form, its classic finish, but had gained immeasurably in depth and elevation of feeling. One note especially rang out from the heart of the troubadour in accents strong and pure—love; not love the groveling passion of the bacchanalian feast, but love the heaven-born sentiment of the Christian knight, which, together with that nobler love of God, inspired man's greatest deeds. And now woman, clothed with the dignity, and hallowed by the radiance of Christian purity, rose again to that proud position by the side of man, which pagan antiquity had denied her, but which the hand of the Creator had assigned to her from the beginning of time. In the poet, love became the never-failing source of inspiration, and even to a Dante, chastened of all that is earthly, it became the guiding star on his lofty flight through heaven. Still art, despite its elevation, lacked the essential elements of classic form. And here the hand of the All-Wise becomes distinctly traceable in shaping the destiny of man. Ancient art when about to vanish in its own corruption, had been saved from utter annihilation by being entombed in its own ruins, while its traditions had been hoarded and fostered chiefly in the metropolis of the Eastern Empire. Now, at the bidding from On High, its hidden treasures were suddenly unlocked, and poured in a mighty stream over the Western World. It was almost a new revelation, a revelation of the beautiful, a faint reflection of that greater revelation of the True and the Good. And from the models of ancient Greece the Christian artist gleaned that perfect outline, and that magic touch so long lost, and Art was born anew under the sacred shelter of the Church. From Italy the impulse started northward, and Homer and Sophocles were soon out-rivalled, if not in the perfection of form, at least in the sublimity of the ideal, by a Tasso, a Corneille, a Racine, a Schiller, and by our own glorious Shakespeare and Milton.

¶ And now, ladies and gentlemen, what guaranty do we derive from this outlook into the past for our purpose of foreshadowing the future? We cannot close our eyes to the fact that art, in