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had been so largely instrumental in moulding it was gradually replaced by a warmer one from the south. The austere and refined principles of the school of van Eyck, when once they were thoroughly assimilated by the French, bore fruit essentially French in character. There is no longer any doubt in paintings of the end of the fifteenth century as to whether these works are French or Flemish, and consequently we can definitely state that the creation of the French school dates from this time. True, it received recruits from Flanders from time to time, but whilst several eminent painters were among them, they were not indispensable in the carrying forward of the movement.

As time advanced portrait painting began to play an important part to the detriment of religious art; for in the early years of the fifteenth century the portrait became a diplomatic instrument. It has been remarked that many of the important treaties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were treaties of marriage; the almost incessant state of war which reigned in Europe was varied by treaties of peace, and usually one of the essential conditions was the giving in marriage of some lady. In order to see what the lady was like a portrait painter was despatched to make a record of her features, in order that the prospective bride-