

Woman had her apotheosis about the Thirteenth Century. The reason of this is to be found in the words of a poet of that time, "It must be accredited to all women that the Mother of God was a woman." Women rose in esteem according as devotion to Our Lady increased, for the ardent devotion and veneration that was felt for her naturally extended to the sex of which she was the perfect type and exemplar.

Social philosophers may write ponderous and learned articles about the emancipation and elevation of woman, but the philosophy of it all is summed up in these few words, the Mother of God was a woman.

Summarizing in a few words the chief items of the world's political and social inheritance from the Thirteenth Century, we have an organized State preserving the spirit of feudalism, the Great Middle Class and the associated fact of town life, popular representative government, and the emancipation of woman.

It is a widespread notion, but a notion we are glad to say, which is gradually melting away in the sunlight of scientific historical inquiry, that the time from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Century was one long, dreary night of fetid gloom, intellectual torpor, and sterile inaction; and the first blush of the returning day of enlightenment was seen in that revival of classical literature of the Fifteenth Century, the revival that is commonly known as the Renaissance. But, as Emerson remarks, the darkness of those times arises from our own want of information, not from the absence of intelligence that distinguished them. It is only the most superficial student of history that fails to recognize in the Middle Age a period of immense intellectual activity.

The so-called Renaissance of the Fifteenth Century, was, no doubt, a period of unusual intellectual and artistic activity; but it had in it the seeds of moral, religious, and social anarchy. And after all, what was it in its most boasted features but a recrudescence of the decadent paganism of Greece and Rome?

The beneficent effects of the Renaissance of the Fifteenth Century have, to my mind, been magnified and exaggerated beyond reason. As I have said, it was a recrudescence of decadent paganism more than a revival of christian society. An error into which historians commonly fall is to attribute everything that may happen at any time to whatever movement may then predominate; for example, the marvellous Italian painting of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries is attributed to the Renaissance. In my opinion,

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