

under the ills of adverse fortune, because they were more robust morally, and knew the use of that universal anodyne for all human ills, the abiding faith and hope in a hereafter. We have changed much of this. But have we found in the loss a gain to match? In the mediaeval world, the Church did not indulge in dreams or vaporous talk about humanity and the uplifting of the masses. Cold, systematized philanthropy was to her unthought of. She worked with individual men. She knew, as she always knows, that it is her sacred office to extend charity to all—to protect the poor against the ravages of poverty and disease and to shield the weak from the tyranny of the strong. In the Middle Age, the State or private individual never had to care for the poor. That sacred office was assumed by the Church. Wandering paupers and State-cared-for unfortunates were to be found only after that disastrous event of the Sixteenth Century which broke the unity of Christendom and interfered with the benign functions of the Church.

As I have remarked, organized central governments came into existence in the Thirteenth Century. But in order to prepare the ground for their establishment, the dignity of the individual and the family had to be raised. This work the Church accomplished by preaching the equality of all men in the eyes of God, by establishing the sanctity of marriage, and elevating the condition of woman.

That woman enjoys a position of social equality with man to-day and is not in the state of utter debasement and degradation in which she was in the old days of Rome and Greece, she owes to the Catholic Church of the Middle Age, and to the Catholic Church alone. Throughout all heathendom, Voluptuousness was worshipped as a goddess. But by Catholicism, maternity was made sacred, and the relationship of marriage sanctified. As a necessary consequence the position of woman was elevated.

In the Thirteenth Century, we find that many women rose even to large political and intellectual influence. Who is there who does not know that masterful woman, Blanche of Castile, who ruled the kingdom of France during the minority of her son Louis IX.; and the brilliant Isabella, who was unfortunately tied to that craven, King John of England? In the literary world of that time one of the brightest names is that of the famous writer of lays, Marie de France. There were no shrieking feline suffragists storming parliaments and legislatures in those days. Women gained respect and reverence by virtue of those gentle graces that make them the worthy objects of chivalry.

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