

tion of learning. These events mark the close of the Middle Ages. The Renaissance is the beginning of modern history, and Mr. Symonds defines it as "the whole transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern World," the chief features of the Middle Ages being feudalism or subordination in politics and "mental prostration before the idols of the church—dogma and scholasticism." Thus the Renaissance in Italy did not mean at all the same thing that it did in the rest of Europe, for feudalism had less hold on Italy than on any other European state, and Italy was too near the sources of supreme ecclesiastical authority to be prostrate before it. But Italy took a leading part in the revival of classical ideas, in the revelation of an older and in many ways freer and more enlightened world, that had existed before the military spirit and ecclesiasticism of the Dark Ages had cramped men's minds. The ideas which Italy developed she handed on to the other nations of Western Europe, and their reception was truly a Renaissance, or new Birth, marking a breach with the past and the adoption of a new point of view towards the world. "What was a distinct epoch in the history of every other European country was not so in Italy. In a sense, the entire history of Italian art and literature is a history of the Renaissance; in another sense, the Renaissance is a period of European history from which Italy was practically exempt." The present note would have to be indefinitely extended if any attempt were made to trace the effects of this new spirit on the different arts and sciences. It will be sufficient to point to the classical revival in Architecture, and to the new life thrown into the English drama. But the great result of the Renaissance must be noticed. This was nothing less than the social and religious change which marks the 16th century, the Reformation.

Mr. Moncure Conway has lately given an interesting account of the curious legend of the Wandering Jew. The belief in the existence of this man doomed to a joyless immortality and a perpetual wandering over the face of the earth was very widespread. It appears as early as the 13th century in the chronicle of Matthew Paris, and it has taken different forms. The name of the Jew who insulted Christ has been variously given as Ahasuerus, as Cartaphilus, as Buttadæus in Germany, and as Isaac Lakedion in France. The persistence of the belief gave birth to imposture, and there seems little doubt that persons from time to time gave themselves out as the Wanderer. The myth illustrates two sentiments that were very strong in the Middle ages. It is the expression of the undying popular hatred of the Jewish race that found vent in the constantly renewed persecutions. As a legend it should be classified with the belief in the immortality of personages who were either too great or too holy to die, or who for their sins were forbidden the repose of the grave. To the former class belong the legends of Odin, King Arthur, Barbarossa, and Charlemagne. Under the latter class we may place Cain, the first murderer and also the first wanderer. Of the same nature as the legend of the Wandering Jew are those of the Wild Huntsman and the Flying Dutchman. Classical mythology furnishes us with illustrations of the idea in the stories in Tithonus and Tiresias. The story has been a favourite one with writers of fiction.

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