

Christian, though "pliantly submissive" to ecclesiastical form from motives of self-interest. At best, the religion of Italy during the period was emotional and ritualistic rather than ethical. Savonarola and Tito are extremes typical of two characteristic tendencies of the age—the one experiencing visions of pious exaltation, the other giving only formal observance to the "profitable fable of Christ." Those like the latter, absorbed in the pleasures of culture, luxury and power, only contributed to the nation's moral stagnation; those of the first type, visionary and mystical, at most stirred only the surface scum. Thus vitiated, the Italian race, as well as being incapacitated for moral effort, was impotent for political action or resistance. A precarious equilibrium was maintained among the separate States only by intrigue and the employment of mercenary troops. The overthrow of this, as is shown in "*Romola*," was brought about when Charles VIII. led a French army across the Alps. The degree of helplessness to which the Italians had fallen became disastrously evident during the long

years following, when the peninsula became the battle-field of Spanish, French, and German forces.

Interesting it is to note that of the two women-authors to whom the English-speaking race awards the palm of genius, each has found in "beauteous Florence" the human environment and scenic colour for a masterpiece. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, "From Casa Guida Windows," throbs with the re-asserting life of a long-enslaved race. "*Bella Liberta*" is its refrain, and its sympathetic fervour was of, and for, the present. George Eliot's novel, "*Romola*," pictures a time long past—the glorious, soulless noon of splendour in the City of Flowers—the age of culture, intrigue, and vice, whose spirit has been embodied by Robert Browning, as by no one else, in "The Gramscian's Funeral" and "The Bishop Orders His Tomb." But though delineating lives of long ago, the moral energy of the novel is as truly of to-day as that of the poem. And if the impassioned singer of the latter moves us as "A Priestess of Liberty," her sister appeals to us surely as "A Priestess of Right."

*Stambury R. Tarr.*

## THE MODERN ENGLISH GIRL.\*

BY MADAME SARAH GRAND, AUTHOR OF "THE HEAVENLY TWINS," ETC.

THOSE who look upon the modern girl as in some sort the result of their own efforts for the emancipation of her sex watch her progress with very mixed feelings. In so far as she is an improvement on the girls of other days, it is a joy to contemplate her; but in view of her failings there is cause for disheartenment. We must remember, however, that she is so much stronger, so much more pronounced in every way than her colourless predecessor, that what would have passed for an amiable trait in a girl of the past generation stands out as a fine quality in the girl of to-day; while, on the other hand, those little weaknesses which provoked

the mild recurrent ridicule of our ancestors threaten now to develop into faults or failings with which society will have to reckon.

Strength is one of the coming characteristics of the modern English girl. It is as if nature were fitting her to be the mother of men who will keep us in our proud place as the dominant race. She begins already to show herself superior to the girls of other nations in her courage, and the fineness of her physique, in the soundness of her judgment, and in her knowledge of life, and her capacity for dealing with the problems which beset her.

There was a picture, some little time

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