

## Women Painters of the World

fall, there were some women who still deserve to be remembered for their patronage of art. Amalasontha, daughter of Theodoric the Great, Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards, Hroswitha, in her convent at Gandershein, and Ava, the first German poetess, these ladies, and many others, made colonising names, names that visited distant lands and gave ambition to other women.

Briefly, the Renaissance was heralded by a long, troubled dawn ; but it came at last, and its effects on the destinies of women were immediate and far-reaching. In Italy, one by one, the Universities were opened to the fair, that of Bologna leading the way in the 13th century, when Betisia Gozzadini studied there with success, dressed as a boy, like Plato's pupil, Axiothea. And a line of girl graduates connects Betisia Gozzadini with the women lecturers who became so famous at Bologna in the 18th century : Anna Manzolini, Laura Bassi, Clotilde Tambroni, Maria Agnesi, and Maria Dalle-Donne.

It is not easy to explain why the Italian towns and universities gave so much encouragement to the higher aspirations of girls. In poetry, in art, in learning, that encouragement was equally remarkable, and I am tempted to assign its origin to the martial temper of the Middle Ages, which drew many young men from the universities to take part in the exercises of the tilt-yard or in the perils of the battlefield, leaving the fields of learning in need of zealous labourers. Women, on the other hand, exposed their hearts, but not their lives, to the hazards of duels, tournaments and wars ; they lived longer than men, as a rule, and hence it was worth while to encourage publicly those gifts of the female mind and spirit which had long been cultivated privately for the benefit of peaceful nunneries.

Still, whatever the origin of it may have been, the pride taken by the Italians in their gifted women is among the most important facts in the history of their Renaissance. But for that pride, the scores of ladies who became noted in the arts would have remained unknown in their homes, and the story of those times would lack in its social life a counterpart of that radiant chivalry that cast so much tenderness and sanctity