

tures of the degenerate Romans. Priceless statues were built into rude walls or burned into lime. We have ourself seen a classic sarcophagus used as a horse-trough.

Our author proceeds to trace the revival of Latin literature, the rise of the universities, and "new birth" of art. He describes, also the dawn of science, the growing appreciation of nature, and "the discovery of man," as he calls it, that is, the recognition of his moral and spiritual relations. The feudal system and chivalry never had the influence in Italy, either in their repressing or ennobling aspects, that they had beyond the Alps. The free cities and free commerce promoted an equalization of classes. But the Italian *condottiere* were surely the vilest type of hireling butchers who ever degraded the name of soldier.

Among the elements of progress our author notices the refinement of life and language, of domestic economy and polite society, and the influence of the festivals and pageants of the Church.

One of the most instructive, though painful, sections of the book, is that on the morality and religion of the Renaissance. The period was characterized by an utter worldliness—a semi-paganism, a blending of ancient and modern superstition that sapped the foundations of all morality, caused a general disintegration of belief, and made the city of the popes the vilest spot on earth. "The ideas of sin and of salvation," says our author, "seem almost entirely to have evaporated." The honest heart of Martin Luther was horrified at the wickedness in high places. The cloisters of religion and the courts of the Vatican were honeycombed with vice, and the name of the Borgias has become forever the synonyme for the uttermost corruption of human nature.

Brigandage, paid assassination, poisoning, the horrible vendetta, or sacred duty of revenge, and the destruction of social morality, present an awful picture of the state of society. The preaching of Savonarola, the fervour of the Franciscans, the austere poetry of Dante, could only retard, not prevent, the moral degradation of the period—illustrious as it was in art and letters—of the Renaissance.

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