

nation's downfall. Messalina was more ominous than Nero. On the other hand, many a nation has received everlasting uplift from a noble woman. Reference has been made to the Abbess Hilda in the seventh century. Of similar significance is the story of Queen Margaret of Scotland at the close of the eleventh century. The high-souled, sensitive Saxon princess who wedded the swarthy Malcolm gave to Scotland those elements of imaginative vision and religious zeal which have characterized the nation ever since.

That woman has won her pre-eminent success in literature in the novel is a fact of peculiar moment. The modern novel dates only from the middle of the eighteenth century, when, stimulated by the efforts of the four sturdy writers of the time of Queen Anne, the higher education of women began to take shape and form. There never was a time when there was in England a lower estimate of women than at the close of the seventeenth century. After the Restoration we have the decay of the Feudal ideal. "The passionate adoration with which woman was regarded in the Age of Chivalry had degenerated into a habit of insipid gallantry or of brutal license, contempt veiled under a show of deference, a mockery of chivalry, its form without its spirit. This was the attitude towards women in the years succeeding the Restoration." It was this that made Defoe propose as one of his projects a college for the higher education of women. Swift, too, the black-browed, the terrible Dean, saw that only by such opportunities as a college could afford could woman be given her due and rightful place. And you all know what was accomplished in this direction by the essays of Steele and Addison in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*. They showed to the world what it had lost sight of—the true feminine ideal. When in the 49th *Tatler* Steele said of the Lady Elizabeth Hastings, "to love her is a liberal education," he not only paid the most magnificent compliment on record, but he gave external expression to the dignity and benign power of woman in her several relations and true sphere.

Now that everywhere women are admitted to the higher institutions of learning on equal terms with men and have full opportunities for undergoing that elaborate discipline which is the basis of all true originality in speculation and productive scholarship, we may reasonably expect worthy results in other departments of thought and expression. More than this, may we not dream that as a result of this educational activity these native qualities of woman, trained and disciplined to new powers, may give the world literary forms hitherto unthought of. We see indications of this around us. Woman's attempts at social reconstruction and reorganization in the form of problem-drama and sex-romances, blundering and ludicrous, and worse as many of them are, make us dare to hope that a woman will give the world a work of art, that, like a mirror, will reflect the complex and multitudinous life of modern society, with its hungry materialism shot through by the aspiration of the human soul, and its grief and sorrow illuminated by the "light that never was on sea or land."