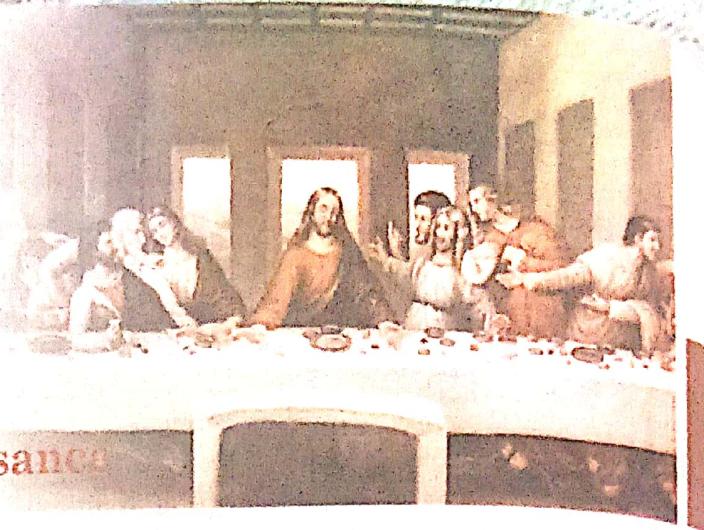


CHAPTER 11

The Modern Age in Europe (A) Renaissance



SYLLABUS

The Modern Age in Europe

(a) Renaissance — definition, causes (capture of Constantinople, decline of Feudalism, new trade routes, spirit of enquiry and invention of the printing press) and impact on art, literature and science (Leonardo Da Vinci, William Shakespeare and Copernicus).

The term **Renaissance** means rebirth or revival. It stands for a complex transitional movement in Europe between medieval and modern times beginning in the 14th century in Italy and lasting into the 17th century. It marked the revival of the freedom to think and act without being controlled by any external agency. It was also a revival of the study of the ancient Greek and Roman classics. During this period, many remarkable changes took place in Europe, which had their impact on the history of the world. One of them was the disintegration of the feudal system in Europe which ushered in a new social and economic order. This marked the beginning of the modern era.

CAUSES OF RENAISSANCE

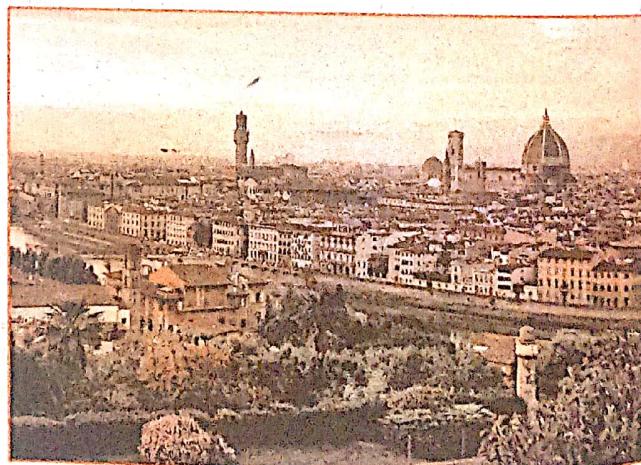
1. CAPTURE OF CONSTANTINOPLE

Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire and was a centre of Greek and Roman cultures. It had valuable manuscripts of Greek and Roman writers. But Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks in 1453. Many Greek and Roman scholars were thus, forced to shift to Rome and other parts of Europe with

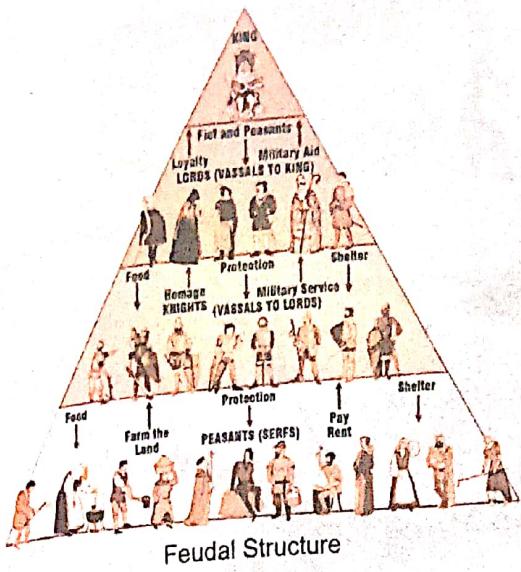
their manuscripts. Rome then became the centre of Greek culture. These scholars were geniuses, men of liberal outlook, humanism and logical thinking. Wherever they went, they spread their new spirit and ideas. In this way they revived the interest of the people in the study of Greek philosophy, science, art and literature. The revival of the learning of Greek classics paved the way for the Renaissance.

2. DECLINE OF FEUDALISM

Feudalism was a system according to which the medieval European society was organised on the basis of land tenure. In this system, all the people, from the King down to the lowest landowners were bound together by obligation and defence. The King used to give estates to his lords, who were known as *Dukes* and *Earls*. The Lords, distributed a part of their land among the lesser lords or *Barons*, who provided them with military support. The Dukes and Earls owed allegiance directly to the King, whereas the Barons owed allegiance to the Dukes and Earls. The knights formed the lower category of feudal



Florence in Italy



lords. The feudal lords did not cultivate their lands and gave it to the peasants for cultivation.

The society had a graded organisation in which there was hardly any chance for social mobility and progress. It was also opposed to freedom and equality of rights. However, decline of feudalism in the 13th and 14th centuries provided an impetus to free thinking. The peace and freedom that prevailed after the decline of feudalism favoured the growth of New Learning. It led to the new developments in the spheres of art, literature, philosophy and science and contributed to the rise of Renaissance.

3. NEW TRADE ROUTES

The navigators of Portugal and Spain played an important part in the geographical explorations and discovering new trade routes. Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turks in 1453 and the trade routes between the West and the East were closed. As a result, the European traders and

navigators felt the need for discovering new sea routes. Prince Henry, the Navigator of Portugal discovered a sea route to Africa. Bartholomew Diaz was successful in reaching the Cape of Good Hope at the southernmost point of Africa. Columbus discovered America in 1492. In 1498 Vasco da Gama sailed as far as India. Ferdinand Magellan made a voyage around the world and reached a vast ocean, which he called the Pacific Ocean. Due to these discoveries, contact between the East and the West began to develop and there was a fusion of ideas. The opening of new trade routes not only encouraged trade but also created the spirit of adventure and broadened the mental horizon.

4. SPIRIT OF ENQUIRY

In the Medieval Age, all human activities, both mental and physical, were controlled and guided by the authority of the Pope and the Church. The human mind was virtually not allowed to develop independent thinking. But a number of scholars discarded the ideas of medieval period and developed a spirit of enquiry and a sense of curiosity among the people. They taught human beings to know the *Why* and *How* of things. They did not regard anything as correct merely because the theologies of the Church had regarded it as correct. They questioned the authority of the Church. They wanted a transition from faith to reason, observation and experimentation. The following were the factors which were responsible for the development of the spirit of enquiry:

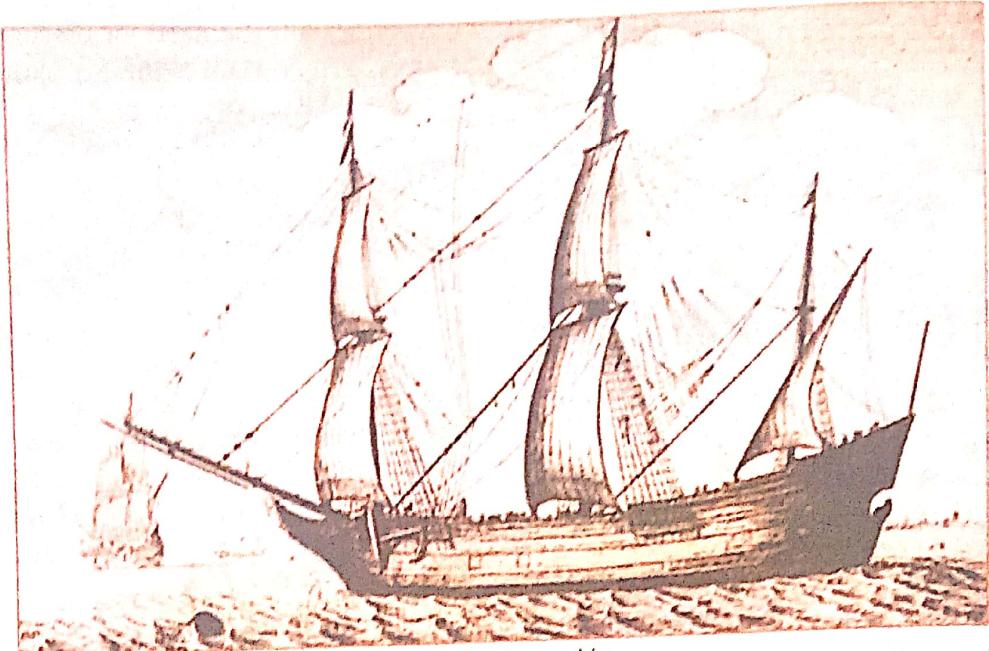
(i) **Role of Original Thinkers:** During the Medieval Age, the Church discouraged original thinking and called upon scholars to put faith in the Church dogmas. However, original thinking could not be suppressed for a long time and certain bold and independent thinkers criticised the Church and asked the people to develop their own thinking. Thinkers like Roger Bacon, Abelard, Thomas Aquinas revolutionised the thought process and laid stress on reasoning. These original thinkers are called the forerunners of Renaissance.

(ii) **Crusades:** The Crusades were the religious expeditionary wars with the goal of restoring the Church's access to holy places in and near



Christopher Columbus

Ferdinand Magellan



Sixteenth century ship

Jerusalem. They brought the people of Europe into direct contact with the people of Asia. The Crusades brought to Western Europe ideas from the East. It widened their outlook on life. People began to rely on reason rather than on blind faith.

(iii) **Development of Science:** In the age of faith, science had little scope for development. But certain medieval scholars showed a scientific attitude and asked their students to observe things in nature. This brought in many new inventions and discoveries. Development of science created the spirit of enquiry and scientific temper. Roger Bacon contemplated the use of horseless carriages and flying machines. Copernicus proved that the earth moves round

the sun. Galileo invented the telescope. These inventions broadened the mental outlook of the people and put an end to the old beliefs and traditions.

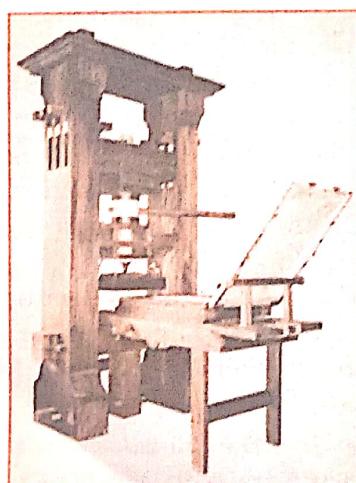
5. INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS

The first printing press was set up in Germany by Gutenberg in the middle of the 15th century. Later on Caxton introduced it in England.

The invention of printing press in the middle of the 15th century in Europe made it possible to produce books in large numbers. The Bible and many other religious and classical books were printed and made available all over Europe. The printing press spread knowledge far and wide. Scholars found it easier to read printed books than hand-written manuscripts. In the Middle Ages, books were few and they were beyond the reach of the ordinary people. The Printing Press enabled Europe to multiply books and put them within the reach of people. Printing and distribution of books influenced people's attitude to life and brought about a new awakening in Europe.

PRINCIPLES OF RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance was not a sudden or spontaneous development. It was based on certain beliefs of what is right or wrong. It had certain features which touched different aspects of life. The common people, the aristocrats, the kings and even the Popes were affected by it.



Printing Press

Humanism: Humanism was regarded as the most remarkable phenomena of Renaissance. It was a product of the spread of education and learning. The word 'humanism' was derived from the Latin words 'Studia humanitatis' or 'the studies of mankind'. Basically, it meant a decisive shift in concern for human as distinct from divine matters. Humanism extolled man and stressed his essential dignity. It was centred on the man of flesh and blood with all his earthly joys and sorrows. It opposed religious asceticism. It defended man's right to pleasure and the satisfaction of earthly desires and requirements.

The humanists looked deep into the ancient classics for ideas on humanism like those of Plato, Virgil, Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilianus.

Glorification of Human Form: The Renaissance scholars and artists glorified human body. Their works were permeated with the faith that a man with an active mind and body was capable of knowing and controlling the world, of performing miracles and fashioning his own happiness. This spirit of humanism found expression in the new art and literature. The Renaissance artists took their subjects from the Bible but portrayed the human form in all its earthly beauty and vigour.



Renaissance Paintings



In this Chapter, following traditional conventions, man is used to refer to humankind as an entity.

The Modern Age in Europe (A) Renaissance

Spirit of Enquiry: The Renaissance humanists believed in limitless potentialities of man but they also did not forget the past. The spirit of enquiry extended from scientific enquiry into nature, explorations and expeditions to probe into every realm of knowledge. It proved to be the principle cause of Renaissance.

Beginning of Renaissance

The Renaissance first began in Italy and from there it spread to other parts of the world. This was because of the following reasons:

- (i) Italy was the seat of the glorious Roman Empire and all the historical remains and relics of the Romans were found there. These attracted a number of scholars and artists.
- (ii) As a result of the Fall of Constantinople, a large number of Greek scholars and thinkers migrated to Italy along with their original manuscripts and art treasures. These scholars not only instilled a spirit of enquiry and enthusiasm among the people of Italy but also encouraged a large number of Italian artists and men of letters to produce masterpieces of art and literature.
- (iii) The enormous wealth which Italy had accumulated as a result of trade with the East also contributed to the rise of



Leonardo Da Vinci



Mona Lisa

Renaissance. The wealthy merchants of Italy patronised the artists and literary figures and used their wealth for the revival of classical culture and literature.
(iv) As a result of the crusades and geographical explorations the Italians came into contact with the East. This greatly broadened their vision and provided an impetus to Renaissance.

IMPACT OF RENAISSANCE

The Renaissance had a great impact on all the aspects of life — art, literature, philosophy, science, religion, etc. It was due to the spirit of Renaissance that significant traits emerged in the realm of art, thought and literature.

ART

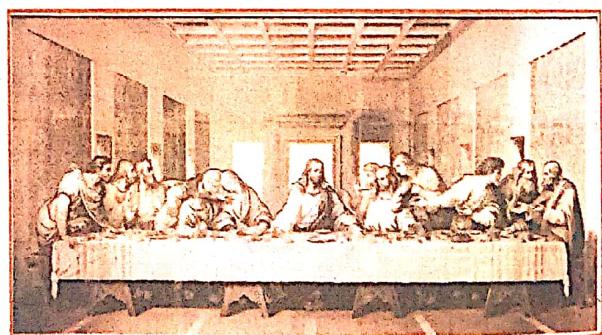
The Renaissance did not merely lead to the rebirth of learning but also to the rebirth of art. During the medieval times, the paintings and sculptures served as a tool for propagating religion. Even the colours which the painters used were strictly regulated. However, the artists of the Renaissance period refused to abide by medieval rules and traditions. They adopted new artistic methods such as frescoes for wall pictures, oil colours and woodcuts. They studied optics and geometry and used their knowledge to develop perspective in their paintings. They also studied human anatomy to find the mechanism underlying gestures and expressions.

PAINTING

The Renaissance painters established very high standards and produced some of the greatest paintings of the time. They were able to show their talent without being restricted by the rigid rules of the church. They had a humanistic secular approach and produced highly artistic and life like paintings.

Some of the prominent painters of the Renaissance period were the following:

Leonardo Da Vinci: Leonardo Da Vinci was a great painter, sculptor, musician and a scientist. Da Vinci received no formal education beyond basic reading, writing and maths, but his father appreciated his artistic talent and apprenticed him at around the age of 15 to the noted sculptor and painter Andrea del Verrocchio, of Florence. For about a decade, Da Vinci refined his painting and sculpting techniques and trained in mechanical arts.



The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci

Da Vinci's interests ranged far beyond fine arts. He studied nature, mechanics, anatomy, physics, architecture and weaponry. He saw science and art as complementary rather than distinct disciplines, and thought that ideas formulated in one realm could, and should, inform the other. He spent a great deal of time immersing himself in nature, testing scientific laws, dissecting bodies (human and animal) and thinking and writing about his observations. At some point in the early 1490s, Da Vinci began filling notebooks related to four broad themes—painting, architecture, mechanics and human anatomy—creating thousands of pages of neatly drawn illustrations.

His paintings of the 'Virgin of the Rocks', 'The Last Supper' and 'Mona Lisa' are great masterpieces of art. New techniques were adopted in his paintings to give a fine feeling of reality.

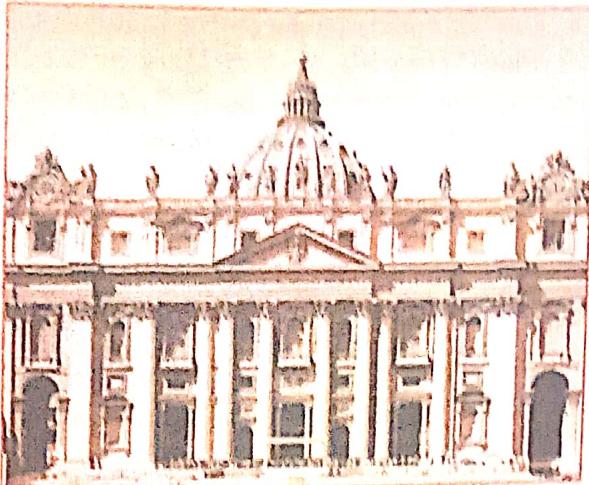
'Michelangelo': Michelangelo was a painter, sculptor, architect and poet. He concentrated on painting the human figure. He is famous for his paintings in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican. They depict incidents and persons from the Old Testament. His *Last judgement* and *The Fall of Man* are among the most famous works of art in the world.

'Raphael': Raphael was a great artist of the Florentine school and his most celebrated painting was 'Sistine Madonna'. He lived several years in Rome in the service of the Pope, decorating the Vatican and designing the St. Peter's Church.



Statue of Moses by Michelangelo

For information only.



St. Peter's Church, Rome

SCULPTURE

The revival of the study of antiquity left a great impact in the field of sculpture. Some of the Renaissance artists copied the great masterpieces of the Greeks and Romans, while the others produced outstanding pieces which could rival the Greek creations.

Some of the outstanding sculptors of the Renaissance period were:

- The first great sculptor of Renaissance was *Donatello*, who made the bronze statue of David, triumphant over the body of the slain Goliath.
- The famous sculptor in Italy was *Lorenzo Ghiberti*. He worked for 20 years to make two pairs of bronze doors for the Baptistry at Florence.



Pieta

- Michelangelo made a statue in Rome called 'Pieta' showing Mother Mary in a seated posture carrying the body of Jesus across her chest. The huge statues of David in Florence and the statue of Moses were also made by Michelangelo.

In Italy many sculptors worked for the Popes or rich merchants, to decorate churches or palaces with their sculptures. Later on the sculptors were invited to England, France or Spain and they spread the Renaissance art to the rest of Western Europe.

LITERATURE

The most significant impact of Renaissance on literature was the use of local languages, instead of Latin, as in the Middle Ages. Besides, there was a change of themes in the literary work. Earlier writers dwelt on spiritual themes including heaven. However, during Renaissance, the authors wrote on man and his problems. Such emphasis on man gave birth to a new movement known as *Humanism*.

Literature in Italy: Machiavelli was a great political writer of Italy. He expressed his political ideas in his work '*The Prince*'. Dante's '*Divine Comedy*' is an epic poem on the state of the soul. It reveals the religious and social life of the day. Petrarch, a great scholar and writer, has been called 'the father of humanism'. His sonnets and lyrics were popular throughout Europe.

Other Italian writers were Aristo, Tasso and Boccaccio. Boccaccio wrote in prose. His work *Decameron* is a collection of 100 famous short stories.

Literature in England: England produced a number of writers, poets and dramatists of repute. Geoffrey Chaucer heralded the Renaissance literature in England. He is regarded as the 'Father of English Poetry.' '*The Canterbury Tales*', is his outstanding work. Thomas More wrote *Utopia* describing an imaginary island in America where the rich did not exploit the poor. There, the society had no blind faith and it did not believe in useless wars.

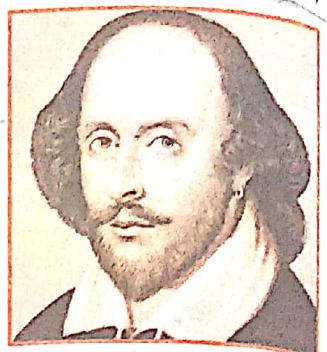
Other famous English writers in this period were Francis Bacon, William Shakespeare, Ben Johnson and Marlowe. Francis Bacon was a famous essay writer. Shakespeare, Ben Johnson,

Marlowe were well-known dramatists. '*Paradise Lost*' is an immortal work of Milton. Edmund Spencer wrote the poem, '*Faerie Queene*'.

William Shakespeare: He was an English poet, playwright and actor, who is widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet and the 'Bard of Avon'. He wrote 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems and a few other verses. With the exception of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare's first plays were mostly historical dramas like *Richard II*, *Henry VI* and *Henry V*. He also wrote several comedies during his early period: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.

It was only after 1600, that he wrote tragedies like *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*.

Shakespeare's work transcends culture and history. He appeals to emotions and thoughts that are a part of eternal human nature and therefore, have a universal appeal.

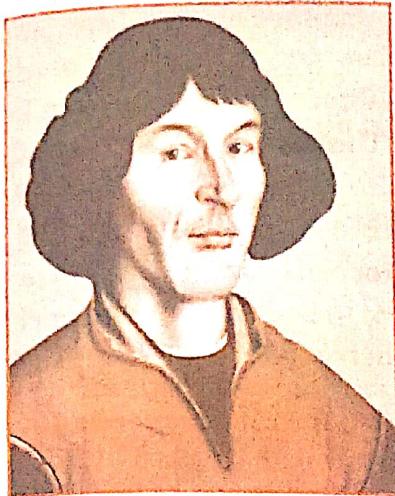


William Shakespeare

SCIENCE

The Renaissance marked the beginning of modern science. Earlier it was held that all views even on Science are to be supported by the authority of the scriptures. However, the scientists of this period believed that all views on Science should be based on observation and experimentation. The method of enquiry, questioning, observation and experimentation are used even today in scientific investigations.

Nicolaus Copernicus: He was a mathematician and astronomer, who formulated a model of the universe that placed the sun rather than the earth at the centre of the universe. The publication of this model in his book *De revolutionibus orbium celestium* (On the Revolutions of the Celestial spheres) just before his death in 1543



Nicolaus Copernicus

regarded as a major event in the history of science, triggering the Copernican Revolution.

Copernicus based his Heliocentric theory on the following:

- There is no one centre of all celestial circles or spheres.
- The centre of the earth is not the centre of the universe, but only of gravity and of the lunar sphere.
- All the spheres revolve about the sun as their midpoint and therefore, the sun is the centre of the universe.
- The earth has more than one motion, turning on its axis and moving in a spherical orbit around the sun.

Later on, a German Scientist John Kepler proved that the earth and other planets move round the sun not in a circle but in elliptical orbits. Italian Scientist, Galileo invented the telescope. Sir Isaac Newton discovered the Law of Gravitation.

Great discoveries were made in the field of medical sciences. Vesalius wrote a treatise on anatomy. William Harvey, an English physician, discovered the circulation of blood from the heart to all parts of the body and back to the heart. Paracelsus proved a close connection between medicine and chemistry. Cordus prepared ether from alcohol and sulphuric acid. Helmont discovered carbon dioxide.

Arabs gave Algebra and numerals to the West. Modern Geometry was made systematic by Desargues. Stevin advocated decimal system of coins, weights and measures.

CONSEQUENCES OF RENAISSANCE

Led to the Reformation Movement in Europe:

Renaissance paved the way for Reformation in England and in Europe. People started viewing everything by questioning, observation and experimentation. They became critical of the rituals practised by the Church and insisted on the reform of the Church. This led to the division of the Church into two sects—Catholics and the Protestants.

Development of Humanism: In the Middle Ages the only study undertaken was that of spirituality and theology. They were more interested in the future life. Renaissance widened the outlook of people and created an interest in man, his interests, his nature and his life in this world. It developed humanism and encouraged the study of humanities.

Development of Scientific Outlook: Renaissance contributed to the development of the scientific attitude and encouraged the people to accept the things only if they appealed to reason. This scientific outlook gave a setback to blind faith and encouraged new discoveries and inventions which greatly contributed to the progress of human civilisation.

Rise of Monarchical Form of Government: Renaissance provided great impetus to the evolution of strong monarchical system of Government in Europe. The decline of the authority of the Church and the feudal system strengthened the desire of the people to have peace, security and political stability. Thus, they readily provided support to the kings and enhanced the powers of monarchs.

Development of Arts: Renaissance led to new forms of paintings, sculpture, architecture, music, etc. It, thus, rendered valuable service to the growth of fine arts.

Rise of the Middle Class: In the Middle Ages feudal lords controlled everything. They held a greater part of the territory of their country in their hands and consequently they had the leisure to enjoy the comforts and luxuries of life. But the new movement gave



them a setback and in their place, the traders, soldiers, lawyers, etc., who belonged to the Middle Class, began to make rapid progress.

Rise and Growth of Nation States:

Renaissance led to the feelings of nationality and the progress of national literature. This in turn led to the rise and growth of nation states.

Consequences of Geographical Explorations:

Scientific inventions enabled

people to explore new routes and distant lands. These geographical discoveries led to the establishment of trade between Europe and the East. These commercial relations brought prosperity to Europe. They also paved the way for the process of colonisation of Asia and Africa. Europeans countries began to export the resources of their colonies in America, Asia and Africa to increase their power.

EXERCISES

I. Multiple-Choice Questions

A. Choose the correct answers to the questions from the given options.

1. Which of the following is the correct order of hierarchy of medieval Europe?
 - (a) Dukes — Barons — Knight — peasants
 - (b) Barons — Earls — Feudal Lords — peasants
 - (c) Earls — Dukes — Knights — Barons
 - (d) Barons — Dukes — Knights — Lords
2. Which of the following was NOT a result of the Fall of Constantinople?
 - (a) Discovery of new trade routes
 - (b) Crusades
 - (c) Decline of Feudalism
 - (d) Revival of learning
3. _____ refer to the religious expeditionary wars with the goal of restoring the Church's access to holy places in and near Jerusalem.
 - (a) Crusades
 - (b) Brisades
 - (c) Black wars
 - (d) Agnar
4. Where did the Renaissance first begin?
 - (a) England
 - (b) India
 - (c) Italy
 - (d) France
5. Which of the following is incorrect?
 - (a) Da Vinci : The Last Supper
 - (b) Donatello : Pieta
 - (c) Machiavelli : The Prince
 - (d) Shakespeare : King Lear
6. What was the Copernican Revolution?
 - (a) Proof that the earth revolves around the sun.
 - (b) Proof that the earth was the centre of the universe.
 - (c) Proof of close connection between medicine and chemists.
 - (d) Proof of circulatory movement of blood in the body.
7. Interest in man, his interests, his nature and his life on earth is referred to as
 - (a) Spirituality
 - (b) Theology
 - (c) Humanism
 - (d) Reformation

B. Read the two statements given below and select the option that shows the correct relationship between (A) and (B).

1. (A) Renaissance, which means rebirth or revival, was a complex transitional movement that began in Europe in the 14th century in Italy and lasted till 17th century.

- (B) Many Greek and Roman scholars shifted to Rome and revived the learning of Greek classics and paved the way for Renaissance.
 (a) (B) contradicts (A) (b) (B) is the reason for (A)
 (c) (A) is true but (B) is false (d) (A) and (B) are independent of each other.
2. (A) The disintegration of the feudal order in Europe ushered in a new social and economic order.
 (B) The new order led to new developments in art, literature, philosophy and science and contributed to the rise of Renaissance.
 (a) (B) contradicts (A) (b) (B) is the reason for (A)
 (c) (A) is true but (B) is false (d) (A) and (B) are independent of each other.
3. (A) The wealthy merchants of Italy patronised the artists and literary figures for the revival of classical culture and literature.
 (B) The opening of new trade routes between the East and the West led to the revival of feudalism in Europe.
 (a) (B) contradicts (A) (b) (B) is the reason for (A)
 (c) (A) is true but (B) is false (d) (A) and (B) are independent of each other.
4. (A) Renaissance led to the use of local languages instead of Latin.
 (B) During Renaissance, the authors dwelt on spiritual themes.
 (a) (B) contradicts (A) (b) (B) is the reason for (A)
 (c) (A) is true but (B) is false (d) (A) and (B) are independent of each other.
5. (A) Renaissance led to the Reformation Movement in England and in Europe.
 (B) During the Renaissance period, there occurred a division of the Church into two sects—Catholics and the Protestants.
 (a) (B) contradicts (A) (b) (B) is the reason for (A)
 (c) (A) is true but (B) is false (d) (A) and (B) are independent of each other.

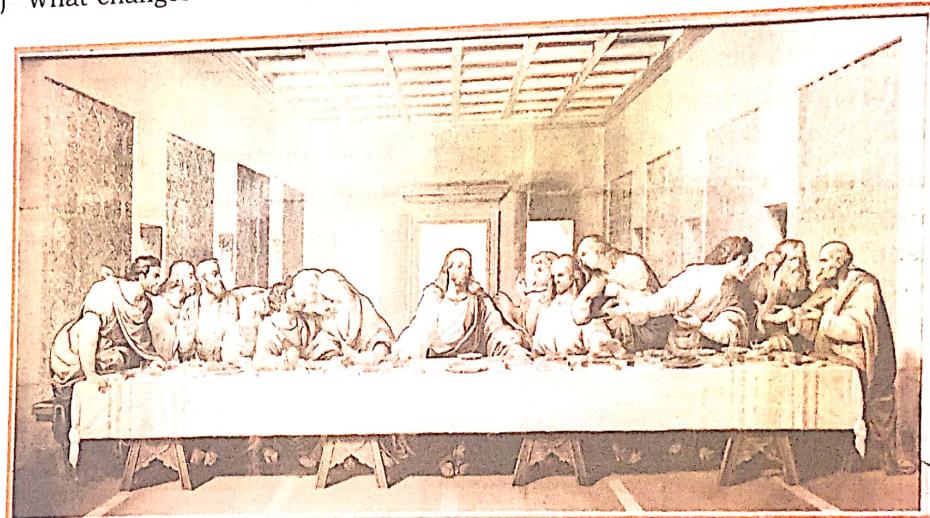
II. Short Answer Questions

- What is meant by the term 'Renaissance'?
- Mention any two causes of the Renaissance.
- What was the result of the victory of the Turks over Constantinople?
- The decline of feudalism led to the rise of Renaissance. Give two reasons.
- Mention any two factors that led to the growth of the spirit of enquiry among the people of Europe.
- How did the invention of the printing press bring in a new awakening in Europe?
- Mention any two consequences of geographical explorations.
- Explain briefly the term 'Humanism'.
- Why did the Renaissance begin in Italy? Give two reasons.
- Renaissance artists tried to depict life on canvas and stone. With reference to this statement, describe the progress in the art of painting.
- Mention the impact of the Renaissance in the field of English literature.

III. Structured Questions

- Many factors contributed to usher in the spirit of Renaissance, which had far-reaching consequences for the entire world. In this context, write short notes on:
 - Invention of the printing press.
 - Decline of Feudalism.
 - Capture of Constantinople.

2. Renaissance brought in a spirit of enquiry among the people of Europe. In this context, answer the following questions:
- Explain briefly the role of original thinkers in promoting the spirit of enquiry among the people of Europe.
 - How did the development of science create the spirit of enquiry?
 - What was the role of Crusades in ushering in the spirit of enquiry?
3. Renaissance or rebirth brought about drastic changes in art, literature and science. In this context, write short notes on the following:
- Leonardo Da Vinci
 - William Shakespeare
 - Copernicus
4. Study the given picture and answer the following questions.
- Identify the painting and name the artist who made it. Name another famous painting by the same artist.
 - Write a short note on the artist who made this painting.
 - What changes occurred in art as a result of the Renaissance spirit in Europe?



IV. Thinking Skills

- Imagine that you went to Rome during the period when the Renaissance movement was at its peak. Describe the spirit of Renaissance among the artists, scientists, authors and the masses.
- How, according to you, the spirit of enquiry has been an important factor in the growth and development of human civilisation? Give examples to support your answer.
- Do you think industrialisation would have been possible without Renaissance? Give reasons to support your answer.
- Compare and contrast the events in Europe with what was happening in India at the time of Renaissance.

