The Project Gutenberg eBook, Woman in Science, by John Augustine Zahm

Title: Woman in Science

With an Introductory Chapter on Woman's Long Struggle for Things of the Mind

Author: John Augustine Zahm

Release Date: January 11, 2011 [eBook #34912]

Language: English

Character set encoding: ISO-8859-1

START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK WOMAN IN SCIENCE

**E-text prepared by Bryan Ness, Josephine Paolucci,
and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team
(http://www.pgdp.net)
from page images generously made available by
Internet Archive/American Libraries
(http://www.archive.org/details/americana)**

Note: Images of the original pages are available through Internet Archive/American Libraries. See http://www.archive.org/details/womaninsciencewi00mozaiala

---

WOMAN IN SCIENCE

**WITH AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER
ON WOMAN'S LONG STRUGGLE
FOR THINGS OF THE MIND**

BY

H. J. MOZANS, A.M., PH.D.

AUTHOR OF "UP THE ORINOCO AND DOWN THE MAGDALENA,"
"ALONG THE ANDES AND DOWN THE AMAZON," ETC.

Que e piu bella in donna que savere?

DANTE, CONVITO.

NEW YORK AND LONDON
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
1913

Printed in the United States of America

TO
MRS. CHARLES M. SCHWAB
AS A SLIGHT TRIBUTE
TO HER CHARMING PERSONALITY
GOODNESS OF HEART AND NOBILITY OF SOUL
THIS VOLUME
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
WITH THE BEST WISHES OF
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

[Pg vii]

The following pages are the outcome of studies begun many years ago in Greece and Italy. While wandering through the famed and picturesque land of the Hellenes, rejoicing in the countless beauties of the islands of the Ionian and Ægean seas or scaling the heights of Helicon and Parnassus, all so redolent of the storied past, I saw on every side tangible evidence of that marvelous race of men and women whose matchless achievements have been the delight and inspiration of the world for nearly three thousand years. But it was especially while contemplating, from the portico of the Parthenon, the magnificent vista which there meets the charmed vision, that I first fully experienced the spell of the favored land of Hellas, so long the home of beauty and of intellect. The scene before me was indeed

enchanting beyond expression; for, every ruin, every marble column, every rock had its history, and evoked the most precious memories of men of godlike thoughts and of

> "A thousand glorious actions that may claim
> Triumphal laurels and immortal fame."

It was a tranquil and balmy night in midsummer. The sun, leaving a gorgeous afterglow, had about an hour before disappeared behind the azure-veiled mountains of Ithaca, where, in the long ago, lived and loved the hero and the heroine of the incomparable Odyssey. The full moon, just rising above the plain of Marathon, intensified the witchery of that memorable spot consecrated by the valor of patriots battling victoriously against the invading hordes of Asia. Hard by was the Areopagus, where St. Paul preached to the "superstitious" Athenians on "The Unknown God." Almost adjoining it was the Agora, where Socrates was wont to hold converse with noble and simple on the sublimest questions which can engage the human mind. Not distant was the site of the celebrated "Painted Porch," where Zeno [Pg viii] developed his famous system of ethics. In another quarter were the shady walks of the Lyceum, where Aristotle, "the master of those who know," lectured before an admiring concourse of students from all parts of Hellas. Farther afield, on the banks of the Cephissus, was the grove of Academus, where the divine Plato expounded that admirable idealism which, with Aristotelianism, has controlled the progress of speculative thought for more than twenty centuries, and enunciated those admirable doctrines which have become the common heritage of humanity.

But where, in this venerable city—"the eye of Greece, mother of arts and eloquence"—was the abode of Aspasia, the wife of Pericles and the inspirer of the noblest minds of the Golden Age of Grecian civilization? Where was that salon, renowned these four and twenty centuries as the most brilliant court of culture the world has ever known, wherein this gifted and accomplished daughter of Miletus gathered about her the most learned men and women of her time? Whatever the location, there it was that the wit and talent of Attica found a congenial trysting-place, and human genius burst into fairest blossom. There it was that poets, sculptors, painters, orators, philosophers, statesmen were all equally at home. There Socrates discoursed on philosophy; there Euripides and Sophocles read their plays; there Anaxagoras dilated upon the nature and constitution of the universe; there Phidias, the greatest sculptor of all time, and Ictinus and Callicrates unfolded their plans for that supreme creation of architecture, the temple of Athena Parthenos on the Acropolis. Like Michaelangelo, long centuries afterwards, who "saw with the eyes and acted by the inspiration" of Vittoria Colonna, these masters of Greek architecture and sculpture saw with the eyes and acted by the sublime promptings of Aspasia, who was the greatest patron and inspirer of men of genius the world has ever known.

I felt then, as I feel now, that this superb monument to the virgin goddess of wisdom and art and science was in great measure a monument to the one who by her quick intelligence, her profound knowledge, her inspiration, her patronage, her influence, had so much to do with its erection—the wise, the cultured, the richly dowered Aspasia. [Pg ix]

This thought it was that started the train of reflections on the intellectual achievements of women which eventually gave rise to the idea of writing a book on woman's work in things of the mind.

The following day, as I was entering the University of Athens, I noticed above the stately portal a large and beautiful painting which, on inspection, proved, to my great delight, to be nothing less than a pictorial representation of my musings the night before on the portico of the Parthenon. For there was Aspasia, just as I had fancied her in her salon, seated beside Pericles, and surrounded by the greatest and the wisest men of Greece. "This," I exclaimed, "shall be the frontispiece of my book; it will tell more than many pages of text." Nor did I rest till I had procured a copy of this excellent work of art.

Shortly after my journey through Greece I visited the chief cities and towns of Italy. I traversed the whole of Magna Græcia and, to enjoy the local color of things Grecian and breathe, as far as might be, the atmosphere which once enveloped the world's greatest thinkers, I stood on the spot in Syracuse where Plato discoursed on the true, the beautiful and the good, before enthusiastic audiences of men and women, and wandered through the land inhabited by the ancient Bruttii, where Pythagoras has his famous school of science and philosophy—a school which was continued after the founder's death by his celebrated wife, Theano. For in Crotona, as well as in Athens, and in Alexandria in the time of Hypatia, women were teachers as well as scholars, and attained to marked distinction in every branch of intellectual activity.

As I visited, one after the other, what were once the great centers of learning and culture in Magna Græcia, the idea of writing the book aforementioned appealed to me more strongly from day to day, but it did not assume definite form until after I had tarried for some weeks or months in each of the great university towns of Italy. And as I wended my way through the almost deserted streets of Salerno, which was for centuries one of the noblest seats of learning in Christendom, and recalled the achievements of its gifted daughters—those wonderful *mulieres Salernitanæ*, whose praises were once sounded throughout Europe, but whose names have been almost forgotten—I began to realize, as never before, that women of intellectual eminence have received too little credit for their contributions to the progress of knowledge, and should have a sympathetic historian of what they have achieved in the domain of learning. [Pg x]

But it was not until after I had visited the great university towns of Bologna, Padua and Pavia, had become more familiar with their fascinating histories and traditions, and surveyed there the scenes of the great scholastic triumphs of women as students and professors, that I fully realized the importance, if not the necessity, of such a work as I had in contemplation. For then, as when standing in silent meditation on the pronaos of the Parthenon, the past seemed to become present, and the graceful figures of those illustrious daughters of *Italia la Bella*, who have conferred such honor on both their country and on womankind throughout the world, seemed to flit before me as they returned to and from their lecture halls and laboratories, where their discourses, in flowing Latin periods, had commanded the admiration and the applause of students from every European country, from the Rock of Cashel to the Athenian Acropolis.

Only then did the magnitude and the difficulty of my self-imposed task begin to dawn upon me. I saw that it would be impossible, if I were to do justice to the subject, to compass in a single volume anything like an adequate account of the contributions of women to the advancement of general knowledge. I accordingly resolved to restrict my theme and confine myself to an attempt to show what an important rôle women have played in the development of those branches of knowledge in which they are usually thought to have had but little part.

The subject of my book thus, by a process of elimination, narrowed its scope to woman's achievements in science. Many works in various languages had been written on what women had accomplished in art, literature, and state-craft, and there was, therefore, no special call for a new volume on any of these topics. But, with the exception of a few brief monographs in German, French and Italian, and an occasional magazine article here and there, practically nothing had been written about woman in science. The time, then, seemed opportune for entering upon a field that had thus far been almost completely neglected; and, although I soon discovered that the labor involved would be far greater than I had anticipated, I never lost sight of the work which had its virtual inception in the peerless sanctuary of Pallas Athena in the "City of the Violet Crown." [Pg xi]

Duties and occupations innumerable have retarded the progress of the work. But not the least cause of delay has been the difficulty of locating the material essential to the

production of a volume that would do even partial justice to the numerous topics requiring treatment. My experience, *parva componere magnis*, was not unlike that of Dr. Johnson, who tells us in the preface to his *Dictionary of the English Language*, "I saw that one inquiry only gave occasion to another, that book referred to book, that to search was not always to find, and that thus to pursue perfection was, like the first inhabitants of Arcadia, to chase the sun, which, when they reached the hill where he seemed to rest, was still beheld at the same distance from them."

Although I have endeavored to give a place in this work to all women who have achieved special distinction in science, it is not unlikely that I may have inadvertently overlooked some, particularly among those of recent years, who were deserving of mention. Should this be the case, I shall be grateful for information which will enable me to correct such oversights and render the volume, should there be a demand for more than one edition, more complete and serviceable. And, although I have striven to be as accurate as possible in all my statements, I can scarcely hope, in traversing so broad a field, to have been wholly successful. For all shortcomings, whether through omission or commission,

"Quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura,"

I crave the reader's indulgence, and trust that the present volume will have at least the merit of stimulating some ambitious young Whewell to explore more thoroughly the interesting field that I have but partially reconnoitred, and give us ere long an adequate and comprehensive history of the achievements of woman, not only in the inductive but in all the sciences.

CONTENTS

[Pg xii]

Le donne son venute in excellenza [Pg xiii]
Di ciascun'arte, ove hanno posta cura;
E qualunque all'istorie abbia avvertenza,
Ne sente ancor la fama non oscura.

What art so deep, what science so high,
But worthy women have thereto attained?
Who list in stories old to look may try,
And find my speech herein not false nor fain'd.

Ariosto, Orlando Furioso,
Canto XX, Strophe 2.

Ad omnem igitur doctrinam ... muliebres animos natura comparavit.

Maria Gaetana Agnesi.

WOMAN IN SCIENCE [Pg 1]

CHAPTER I

WOMAN'S LONG STRUGGLE FOR THINGS OF THE MIND

WOMAN AND EDUCATION IN ANCIENT GREECE

I purpose to review the progress and achievements of woman in science from her earliest efforts in ancient Greece down to the present time. I shall relate how, in every department of natural knowledge, when not inhibited by her environment, she has been the colleague and the emulatress, if not the peer, of the most illustrious men who have contributed to the increase and diffusion of human learning. But a proper understanding of this subject seems to require some preliminary survey of the many and diverse obstacles which, in every age of the world's history, have opposed woman's advancement in general knowledge. Without such preliminary survey it is impossible to realize the intensity of her age-long struggle for freedom and justice in things of the mind or fully to appreciate the comparative liberty and advantages she now enjoys in almost every department of intellectual activity. Neither could one understand why woman's achievements in science, compared with those of men, have been so few and of so small import, especially in times past, or why it is that, as a student of

nature or as an investigator in the various realms of pure and applied science, we hear so little of her before the second half of the nineteenth century.

To exhibit the nature of the difficulties woman has had to contend with in every age and in every land, in order to secure what we now consider her inalienable rights to things of the mind, it is not necessary to review the history of female education, or to enter into the details of her gradual progress forward and upward in the New and Old Worlds. But it is necessary that we should know what was the attitude of mankind toward woman's education during the leading epochs of the world's history and what were, until almost our own day, the opinions of men—scholars and rulers included—respecting the nature and the duties of woman and what was considered, almost by all, her proper sphere of action. Understanding the numerous and cruel handicaps which she had so long to endure, the opposition to her aspirations which she had to encounter, even during the most enlightened periods of the world's history, and that, too, from those who should have been the first to extend to her a helping hand, we can the better appreciate the extent of her recent intellectual enfranchisement and of the value of the work she has accomplished since she has been free to exercise those God-given faculties which were so long held in restraint. [Pg 2]

The first great bar to the mental development of woman was the assumed superiority of the male sex, the opinion, so generally accepted, that, in the scheme of creation, woman was but "an accident, an imperfection, an error of nature"; that she was either a slave conducing to man's comfort, or, at best, a companion ministering to his amusement and pleasure.

From the earliest times she was regarded as man's inferior and relegated to a subordinate position in society. She was, so it was averred, but a diminutive man—a kind of mean between the lord of creation and the rest of the animal kingdom. By some she was considered a kind of half man; by others, as was cynically asserted, she was looked upon as a *mas occasionatus*—a man marred in the making. She was, both mentally and physically, what Spencer would call a man whose evolution had been arrested, while man, as in the modern language of Darwin, was a woman, whose evolution had been completed. [Pg 3]

When such views prevailed, it was inevitable that, so long as physical force was the *force majeure*, a woman should be relegated to the position of a slave or to that of "a mere glorified toy." Every man then said, in effect, if not in words, of the woman who happened to be in his power what Petruchio said of Katherine:

> "I will be master of what is mine own,
> She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
> My household stuff, my field, my barn,
> My horse, my ox, my ass, my everything."

Even after civilization had superseded savagery and barbarism, it was still inevitable, so long as such views found acceptance, that woman should continue to be held in vassalage and ignorance and to suffer all the disabilities and privations of "the lesser man." She was studiously excluded from civic and social functions and compelled to pass her life in the restricted quarters of the harem or gyneceum. This was the case among the Athenians, as well as among other peoples; for, during the most brilliant period of their history, women, when not slaves or hetæræ, were considered simply child-bearers or housekeepers.[1] A girl's education, when she received any at all, was limited to reading, writing and music, and for a knowledge of these subjects she was dependent on her mother. From her earliest years the Athenian maiden was made to realize that the great fountains of knowledge, which were always available for her brothers, were closed to her. Her duty was to become proficient in the use of the needle and the distaff, and, later on, to learn how to embroider, to ply the loom and make garments for herself and for the other members of her family. [Pg 4]

Until she was seven years old, she was brought up with her brothers under the eye of her mother. During this period of childhood she had a certain amount of freedom, but, after her seventh year, she was kept in the gyneconitis—women's quarters—"under the strictest restraint, in order," as Xenophon informs us in his *Œconomicus*, "that she might see as little, hear as little and ask as few questions as possible." On rare occasions she was permitted to be a spectator at a religious procession, or to take part in certain of the choral dances that constituted so important a part in the religious ceremonies of ancient Greece. Whether in public or in private, silence was always considered an imperative duty for a woman.

But more than this. Not only was she expected to observe silence herself, but she was also expected so to conduct herself that no one would have occasion to speak about her. Pericles, in a celebrated discourse, gave expression to the prevailing opinion regarding this phase of female excellence when, on a notable occasion, he addressed to a certain number of women the following words: "Great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character; and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among men whether for good or for evil."[2]

From the foregoing observations it will be seen that the general attitude of the Athenians [Pg 5] toward woman was anything but favorable to her intellectual development, or to her exerting any influence beyond the limits of her own household. And what is said of the Greeks can be affirmed, with still greater emphasis, of the other nations of antiquity. Indeed, it can be safely asserted that, had they all entered into a solemn compact systematically to discredit woman's mental capacity and to repress all her noblest aspirations, they could not have succeeded more effectually than by the methods they severally adopted. In ancient Greece the condition of woman was little better than it is in India to-day under the law of Manu, where the husband, no matter how unworthy he may be, must be regarded by the wife as a god.

And yet, notwithstanding the dominant force of public opinion and the strange traditional prejudices that possessed for the majority of people all the semblance and commanding power of truth, woman was here and there able to break through the barriers that impeded her progress in her quest of knowledge and to defy the social conventions that precluded her from being seen or heard in the intellectual arena.

One of the first and most notable of Greek women to assert her independence and to emerge from the intellectual eclipse which had so long kept her sex in obscurity, was the Lesbian Sappho, who, as a lyric poet, stands, even to-day, without a superior. So great was her renown among the ancients that she was called "The Poetess," as Homer was called "The Poet." Solon, on hearing one of her songs sung at a banquet, begged the singer to teach it to him at once that he might learn it and die. Aristotle did not hesitate to endorse a judgment that ranked her with Homer and Archilochus, while Plato, in his Phædrus, exalts her still higher by proclaiming her "the tenth Muse." Horace and Ovid and Catullus strove to reproduce her passionate strains and rhythmic beauty; but their efforts were little better than [Pg 6] paraphrase and feeble imitation. Her features were stamped on coins, "though she was but a woman," and, after her death, altars were raised and temples erected in honor of this "flower of the Graces," of

> "That mighty songstress, whose unrivaled powers
> Weave for the Muse a crown of deathless flowers."

Second only to the "violet-crowned, pure, sweetly-smiling Sappho," as her rival, Alcæus, calls her, were Gorgo, Andromeda and Corinna. The last of these was the teacher of Pindar, the celebrated lyric poet, whom she defeated five times in poetic contests in Thebes.[3] She was one of the nine lyrical muses, corresponding to "the celestial nine," who dwelt on the sacred slopes of Helicon.[4] Telesilla and Praxilla were two others. The last named was by her countrymen ranked with Anacreon.

Scarcely inferior to Corinna were those ardent pupils of Sappho, who had flocked from the sunny isles of the Ægean and the laurel-crowned hills of Greece around "the fair-haired Lesbian" in her island home, which was, at the same time, a school of poetry and music. The most gifted of these were Danophila, the Pamphylian, and Erinna, whose hexameters were said by the ancients to reveal a genius equal to that of Homer. She died at the early age of nineteen and has always excited a pathetic interest because, like so many others of her sex since her time—women and maidens of the loftiest spiritual aspirations,—she was condemned to the spindle and the distaff when she wished to devote her life to the service of the Muses. The following is her own epitaph: [Pg 7]

> "These are Erinna's songs, how sweet, though slight!
> For she was but a girl of nineteen years.
> Yet stronger far than what most men can write;
> Had death delayed, whose fame had equaled hers?"

Never before nor since did such a wave of feminine genius pass over the fragrant valleys and vine-clad plains of Greece. Never in any other place or time shone so brilliant a galaxy of women of talent and imagination; never was there a more perfect flowering of female intelligence of the highest order. According to tradition, there appeared in the favored land of Hellas, when the entire population of the country was not equal to that of a fair-sized modern city, within the brief space of a century, no fewer than seventy-six women poets. When we remember that the Renaissance produced only about sixty female poets, though in a more extended territory and with a much larger population, and that none of them could approach the incomparable Sappho, or even many of her pupils, in the perfection of their work, we can realize the splendor of the achievements of the female intellect in the Hellenic world during the golden age of feminine poetic art.[5]

One would think that this phenomenal outburst of mental vigor, and especially the marvelous achievements of Sappho, Corinna and those of their pupils and followers, would have compelled the world for all subsequent time to recognize the innate power of the female mind, and perceive the wisdom—not to say justice—of according to women the same advantages for the development of their inborn gifts as were afforded to men. They had proved that, under favorable conditions, there was essentially no difference between the male and the female intellect, and that genius knows no sex. And this they demonstrated not only in poetry, but also in philosophy and in other branches of human knowledge as well. [Pg 8]

Among those who had especially distinguished themselves were Hipparchia, the wife of the philosopher Crates; Themista, the wife of Leon and a correspondent of Epicurus, who was pronounced "a sort of female Solon"; Perictione, a disciple of Pythagoras, who distinguished herself by her writings on *Wisdom* and *The Harmony of Woman*, and Leontium, a disciple and companion of Epicurus, who wrote a work against Theophrastus, which was pronounced by Cicero a model of style.

And was not the school of Pythagoras at Crotona continued after his death by his daughter and his wife, Theano? And did not this fact alone manifest woman's capacity for abstract thought, as effectively as the Lesbian school had demonstrated her talent for consummate verse?[6]

But it was all to no purpose. The comparative freedom and advantages which Sappho, Corinna and their friends had enjoyed was soon—for some reason scarcely comprehensible by us—taken from all the women of Greece except the peculiar class known in history as *hetæræ*—companions. These we should now rank among the *demimonde*, but the Greek point of view was different from ours. The hetæræ were the friends and companions of the men who spent most of their time in public resorts, and they accompanied them to the gymnasium, to banquets, the games, to the theater and other similar assemblies from which [Pg 9]

the wives and daughters of the Athenians, during the golden age of Greece, were rigorously excluded. For so great was the seclusion in which the wives of the Greeks then lived that they never attended public spectacles and never left the house, unless accompanied by a female slave. They were not permitted to see men except in the presence of their husbands, nor could they have a seat even at their own tables, if their husbands happened to have male guests.

It was by reason of this strict seclusion and the enforced ignorance to which they were subjected that we hear very little of the virtuous women of this period of Greek history. We have records of a few instances of filial and conjugal affection, but, outside of this, the names of the wives and daughters of even the most distinguished citizens have long since passed into oblivion. Only the hetæræ attracted public notice, and only among them, during the period to which reference is now made, do we find any women who achieved distinction by their intellectual attainments, or by the influence which they exerted over those with whom they were associated.

But strange as it may appear, these extra-matrimonial connections, far from incurring the censure which they would now provoke, received the cordial recognition of both legislators and moralists, and even those who were considered the most virtuous among men openly entered into these relations without exposing themselves to the slightest stigma or reproach. [Pg 10] Many of the hetæræ, contrary to what is sometimes thought, were "of highly moral character, temperate, thoughtful and earnest, and were either unattached or attached to one man, and to all intents and purposes married. Even if they had two or three attachments but behaved in other respects with temperance and sobriety, such was the Greek feeling in regard to their peculiar position that they did not bring down upon themselves any censure from even the sternest of the Greek moralists."[7]

The most famous men of Greece, married as well as unmarried, had their "companions," many of whom were as distinguished for their accomplishments as for their wit and beauty. Thus Epicurus had Leontium, Menander Glycera, Isocrates Metaneira, Aristotle Herpyllis, and Plato Archlanassa, while Aristippus, the philosopher, Diogenes, the cynic, and Demosthenes, the great orator, each had a companion bearing the name of Lais.[8] More than this. So strongly had many of the hetæræ impressed themselves on the esthetic sense of the beauty-loving Greeks that not a few of them had statues erected in their honor, especially in Athens and Corinth, and thus shared in the honor that hitherto had been reserved exclusively for the goddess of beauty and love, fair Aphrodite.

The hetæræ from Ionia and Ætolia were particularly conspicuous for their intelligence and culture. And all of them, whencesoever they came, enjoyed unrestricted liberty and, unlike the wives of the citizens of Athens, had free access to the Portico and the Academy and the Lyceum, and were permitted to attend the lectures of the philosophers on the same footing [Pg 11] as the men. Thus, to mention only a few, Thais was a pupil of Alciphron, Nicarete of Stilpo, and Lasthenia of Plato.

And so keen were their intellects and so marked was their progress in the most abstract studies, that many of them were recognized as the most distinguished pupils of their masters. This accounts, in part, for the popularity of their salons, at which were gathered the most eminent statesmen, poets, artists, philosophers and orators of the day. The nearest approach in modern times to such trysting-places, where beauty, wit and talent found a congenial atmosphere, were the celebrated salons of Ninon de Lenclos, Mlle. de l'Espinasse and Mme. du Deffand. At these reunions were discussed, not only the news of the day, but also, and especially, art, science, literature and politics, and always to the advantage of both guests and hostesses.

Possessing such freedom and enjoying such splendid opportunities for culture and intellectual advancement, it is not surprising that the hetæræ played so remarkable a rôle in

the social and civic life of Greece, and that they were able to wield such influence over their associates, and that they often attained even the highest royal honors. Nor is it surprising to read in Plato's *Symposium* the splendid tribute which Socrates renders to Diotima of Mantinea, when, in discussing the true nature of divine and eternal beauty, he speaks of her as his teacher.

Many of the hetæræ were not only the models but also the inspirers of the most famous painters and sculptors of antiquity. Thus, Lais was the companion and inspirer of Apelles, the most noted painter of Greece, while Phryne, said to have been the most beautiful woman who ever lived, was the inspirer of the peerless Praxitiles, who, in reproducing her form, succeeded in bequeathing to the world what was undoubtedly the most lovely representation of "the human form divine" that ever came from a sculptor's chisel.[9] [Pg 12]

On account of the relations of the hetæræ, especially those of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C., with the greatest men of their time, the writers of antiquity thought them of sufficient importance to preserve their history. One author has left us an account of no fewer than one hundred and thirty-five of them. But, of all those whose names have come down to us, by far the most noted, accomplished and influential was the famous Aspasia of Miletus. In many respects she was the most remarkable woman Greece ever produced. Of rare talent and culture, of extraordinary tact and finesse, of a fascinating personality combined with the grace and sensibility of her sex, together with a masculine power of intellect, "this gracious Ionian," as has well been said, "stands with Sappho on the pinnacle of Hellenic culture, each in her own field the highest feminine representative of an esthetic race."

At an early age she won the passionate love of the great statesman Pericles, after which she entered upon that marvelous career which secured for her a place in the front rank of the most eminent women of all time. "Her house became the resort of all the great men of Athens. Socrates was often there. Phidias and Anaxagoras were intimate acquaintances, and probably Sophocles and Euripides were in constant attendance. Indeed, never had any woman such a salon in the whole history of man. The greatest sculptor that ever lived, the grandest man of all antiquity, philosophers and poets, sculptors and painters, statesmen and historians, met each other and discussed congenial subjects in her rooms. And probably hence has arisen the tradition that she was the teacher of Socrates in philosophy and politics, [Pg 13] and Pericles in rhetoric. Her influence was such as to stimulate men to their best, and they attributed to her all that was best in themselves. Aspasia seems especially to have thought earnestly on the duties and destiny of women. The cultivated men who thronged her assemblies had no hesitation in breaking through the conventionalities of Athenian society, and brought their wives to the parties of Aspasia; and she discussed with them the duties of wives. She thought they should be something more than mere mothers and housewives. She urged them to cultivate their minds, and be in all respects fit companions for their husbands."[10]

She is said to have written some of the best speeches of Pericles—among them his noted funeral oration over those who had died in battle before the walls of Potidæa. As to Socrates, he himself explicitly refers to her, in the *Memorabilia*, as his teacher. She is a notable character in the Socratic dialogues and appears several times in those of Æschines, while there is every reason to believe that she strongly influenced the views of Plato, as expressed by him in the *Republic* respecting the equality of woman with man.

She was continually consulted regarding affairs of state, and her influence in social and [Pg 14] political matters was profound and far-reaching. This is evidenced by the abuse heaped upon her by the comic dramatists of the time. Referring to the ascendancy which she had over Pericles, she was called Dejanira, the wife of Hercules; Hera, the queen of the gods and wife of the Olympian Jove. It was asserted by her enemies that the Samian war had been brought about at her instigation and that the Peloponnesian war had been undertaken to

avenge an insult which had been offered her. These and similar statements which, when not absurd, were greatly exaggerated, show the boundless influence she wielded over Pericles, and what an important part she took in the government of Greece in the zenith of its glory.

But, however great her influence, we are warranted in asserting that it was never exercised in an illegitimate manner. She was ever, as history informs us, the good, the wise, the learned, the eloquent Aspasia. It was her goodness, her wisdom, her rare and varied accomplishments, her clear insight and noble purposes that gave her the wonderful power she possessed and which enabled her, probably more than any one person, to make the age of Pericles not only the most brilliant age of Greek history, but also the most brilliant age of all time.[11]

But, notwithstanding the beneficent influence which Aspasia ever exerted on those about her, notwithstanding the heroic efforts she had made to liberate her own sex from the restrictions that had so long harassed and degraded it, the wives and daughters of the citizens of Athens were still kept in almost absolute seclusion and denied the opportunities of mental culture which were so generously accorded the free-born hetæræ from Asia Minor and the islands of the Ægean. Socrates, as we learn from Xenophon, asserted woman's equality with man, while Plato taught that mentally there was no essential difference between man and woman. He concluded, accordingly, that women of talent should have the same educational advantages as men. In *The Republic* as well as in the *Laws*, when he refers to education—which he would make compulsory for "all and sundry, as far as possible"—his views are far in advance of those which have been entertained until the last half century. He would have girls as well as boys thoroughly instructed in music and gymnastic—"music for the mind and gymnastic for the body."[12] [Pg 15]

In the *Laws* he contends that "women ought to share, as far as possible, in education and in other ways with men. For consider:—if women do not share in their whole life with men, then they must have some other order of life."

Again he asserts "Nothing can be more absurd than the practice which prevails in our own country of men and women not following the same pursuits with all their strength and with one mind, for thus the state, instead of being a whole, is reduced to a half."[13] [Pg 16]

In *The Republic* he expresses the same idea when he affirms that "the gifts of nature are alike diffused in both"—men and women—"all the pursuits of men are the pursuits of women."[14]

These opinions of Socrates and Plato are so at variance with those of their contemporaries, and so contrary to the custom that then obtained of excluding all but free-born hetæræ from the advantages of education and culture, that we cannot but think that they were due to the profound influence which had been exercised directly or indirectly by Aspasia on both of these great philosophers. Be this as it may, neither the efforts of Aspasia nor the teachings of Socrates and Plato were able to remove the bars to intellectual development from which the women of Greece had so long suffered. A change in customs and laws concerning the rigid, oriental seclusion of women did not come until much later, and then it was under a new régime—that of the Cæsars—while complete equality of men and women in school and college was not recognized until long centuries afterward.

It is interesting to speculate regarding what Greece would have become had she developed her women as she developed her men. Never in the history of the world were there in any one city so many eminent men—poets, orators, statesmen, painters, sculptors, architects, philosophers—as in Athens, and yet not a single native-born Athenian woman ever attained the least distinction in any department of art or science or literature. We cannot conceive for a moment that Greece's fertility in great men and barrenness in great women was due to the fact that the mothers of such illustrious men were ordinary housewives and entirely devoid [Pg 17]

of the talent and genius which gave immortality to their distinguished sons. The careers of Aspasia and the achievements of Sappho, Corinna, Myrtides, Erinna, Praxilla, Telesilla, Myrus, Anytæ and Nossidis, Theano and her daughter, to mention no others, absolutely preclude such an assumption.

The women in Greece, there can be no doubt about it, were as richly endowed by nature as were the men, and only lacked the opportunities that men enjoyed to achieve, in every sphere of intellectual activity, a corresponding measure of success. They were extraordinary types, these women of ancient Greece; for among them we find the dignified Roman matron, the chatelaine of the Middle Ages, the brilliant woman of the Renaissance and the cultured mistress of the French *salon*. But all their talent, power and genius counted for naught.

Had the civilization of Greece been a woman's civilization, as well as a man's civilization, had there been a federation of all the Greek states, as Aspasia seems to have striven for, instead of a number of small and independent city-states; had the women of Hellas been allowed the same liberty of action in intellectual work as was granted to the Italian women during and after the revival of letters, and had they been encouraged to develop all their latent powers that were so systematically suppressed, and to work in unison with the men for the welfare and advancement of a united nation, it is difficult to imagine what a dazzling intellectual zenith a supremely gifted people, "full summ'd in all their powers," would have attained. Their capacity for work and for achieving great things would have been doubled and their power as a political organization would have been practically irresistible.

"We are the only women that bring forth men," said Gorgo, the wife of Leonidas. The Spartan mothers, who had more of liberty than their Athenian sisters, did, indeed, bring forth warriors of undying renown; but it was the mothers of Athens who, notwithstanding [Pg 18] all their grievous disabilities, gave to the world all the greatest masters in art, literature, and philosophy—the men who through the ages have been the leaders and the teachers of humanity, and who seem destined to hold their exalted position until the end of time.

The failure of the men of Greece to avail themselves of the immense potential power, which they always kept latent in their women, was the occasion of a terrible nemesis in the end. For this failure, coupled with the frightful license introduced by a class of educated women, like the hetæræ, without legal status or domestic ties, and the wave of corruption that subsequently followed the advent of the countless dissolute women who flocked to the Hellenic cities from every part of the East, paved the way for the nation's downfall and for its ultimate conquest by the resistless Roman legions that swept the once glorious but ill-fated country of Pericles and Aspasia.

WOMAN AND EDUCATION IN ANCIENT ROME

The condition of women in Rome, especially from 150 B.C. to 150 A.D., was quite different from what it was in Athens, even during her palmiest days. Owing to the lack of authentic documents we know but little of the history of the Roman people during the first five hundred years of their existence, but we do know that during this period many and important changes were effected regarding the social and civil status of women.

In the first place the Roman matron had much more freedom than was accorded the Greek wife during the age of Pericles. Far from being kept in oriental seclusion, like her Athenian sister, she was at liberty to receive and dine with the friends of her husband, and to appear in public whenever she desired. She went to the theater and the Forum; she took part in all reputable entertainment, whether public or private. Besides this, she had more and greater [Pg 19] legal rights than Greek women had ever known, and was treated rather as the peer and companion of man than as his toy or his slave.

Besides this, foreign women were never so conspicuous in Rome as in Athens. Even after Greece had become a Roman province, and after *Græcia capta Romam cepit*—when Greek ideas and Greek customs were introduced into the capital of the Roman world—it was still the Roman matron that was supreme. And, although many Greek women, some of them of rare beauty and culture, found their way to Rome, especially under the empire, they were always kept in the background and never succeeded in achieving anything approaching the ascendancy which distinguished them during the time of Aspasia. Their influence in literature and politics was almost *nil*.

In the case of the women of Rome, on the contrary, it may well be questioned whether woman has ever wielded a greater influence than she did during the three centuries that followed the reign of Augustus. But she did not attain to this position of preëminence without a long and bitter struggle. Every advance toward the goal of social and intellectual equality was strenuously contested by the men, who wished to limit the activities of their wives to the spindle, the distaff and the loom and the other occupations of the household. For, as in Greece, the generally accepted view was that woman, in the language of Gibbon, "was created to please and obey. She was never supposed to have reached the age of reason or experience." And her noblest epitaph, it was averred, was couched in the following words:

> "She was gentle, pious, loved her husband, was skillful at the loom and a good housekeeper."[15]

As to her mental work, far from being considered on its own merits or as a factor in the world's growth, it was flouted as [Pg 20]

> "Mere woman's work
> Expressing the comparative respect
> Which means the absolute scorn."

As early as 450 B.C., when the laws of the Twelve Tables were promulgated, the girls of Rome received instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. "Up before dawn, with a lamp to light the way, and an attendant to carry her satchel, the little Roman maiden of seven years, or over, would trudge off to the portico where the schoolmaster wielded his rod.[16] For some years this life continued, with but few holidays, and those far between, until she attained some proficiency in the rudiments. Then, most probably, her education in the scholastic sense came to an end. Her brothers and boy schoolmates, if their parents wished it, could proceed from the primary school to the secondary, where geography, history and ethics were taught; where the art of elocution was assiduously practiced and the works of the great Greek and Roman poets were carefully read and expounded; but it was enough for [Pg 21] the girl to have learned how to read, write and cipher; she had then to learn her domestic duties."[17]

With the extension of the empire and the consequent enormous increase in wealth and the rapid progress in social and intellectual freedom, there was a notable change in the character of the education given to women, at least to those of the wealthier and patrician families. This was, in great measure, due to the wave of Hellenism which, shortly after the conquest of Greece, broke upon the Roman capital with such irresistible force. To the large and rapidly increasing number of women of keen intellect and lofty aspirations, whose minds had hitherto been confined to the comparatively barren field of Roman letters, the splendid creations of Greek genius came as a revelation. To become thoroughly versed in Greek poetry and proficient in the teachings of Greek philosophy was the ambition of scores of Roman women, who soon became noted for the extent and variety of their attainments, as well as for their rare culture and charming personality.

Among the pioneers of the intellectual movement in Rome, and one of the most beautiful types of the learned women of her time, was the celebrated daughter of the elder Scipio Africanus—Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi. She is famous on account of her devotion to her two sons, Tiberius and Caius. She was their teacher; and it was her educated and refined mind that, more than anything else, contributed to the formation of those splendid characters for which they were so highly esteemed by their countrymen. Plutarch informs us that these noble sons of a noble mother "were brought up by her so carefully that they became beyond dispute the most accomplished of Roman youth; and, thus, they owed perhaps more to their excellent upbringing than to their natural parts."[18] One is not surprised to learn that this noble lady was almost idolized by the Romans, and that they erected a statue to her with the inscription, "Cornelia, Mother of the Gracchi." [Pg 22]

Scarcely less distinguished and accomplished was another Cornelia, the wife of Pompey, the Great. "Besides her youthful beauty," writes Plutarch, in his *Life of Pompey*, "she possessed other charms, for she was well versed in literature, in playing on the lyre, and in geometry, and she had been used to listen to philosophical discourses with profit. Besides this, she had a disposition free from all affectation and display of pedantry—blemishes which such acquirements usually breed in women."[19]

Then there was the cultured and devoted Aurelia, the mother of Julius Cæsar. It is safe to say that this eminent man was as much indebted to his mother for his success and greatness as were Tiberius and Caius Gracchus to the benign influence and careful teachings of the gentle and virtuous Cornelia. Highly educated and of commanding personalities, both these women, like many others of their time, contributed much to the making of Roman history by the success they achieved in molding the characters of some of the greatest men of their own or of any age. [Pg 23]

It is a splendid tribute that Cicero, in his *Orator*, pays to Lælia when he tells of the purity of her language and the charm of her conversation. "When I listen," he declares, "to my mother-in-law, Lælia—for women preserve the traditional purity of accent the best because, being limited in their intercourse with the multitude, they retain their early impressions—I could imagine that I hear Plautus or Nævius speaking, the pronunciation is so plain and simple, so perfectly free from all affectation and display; from which I infer that such was the accent of her father and his ancestors—not harsh like the pronunciation to which I have just referred, not broad nor rustic nor rugged, but terse, smooth and flowing."[20]

These are a few of the cultured and learned women who shed glory on their country by the refining influence which they exerted in the quiet and unostentatious precincts of the family circle. But there were others who chose a wider field for their activities, and who, by reason of their unerring judgment, well-poised and highly cultivated minds, had so won the confidence of the nation's greatest leaders that they were frequently consulted on important affairs of state. Thus, Cicero tells us of an interview which he had at Antium with Brutus and Cassius. Besides the men, there were present on this occasion three women, who took an active part in the discussion. These were Servilia, the mother of Brutus, Porcia, the wife of Brutus and the daughter of Cato, and Tertulla, the wife of Cassius and sister of Brutus. The views of the women were not without effect, and so confident was Servilia of her power that she engaged to have a certain clause in one of the decrees of the Senate expunged. This is but one of many similar instances which might be adduced from the lives of the women of Rome who took an active part in politics. As we learn from Tacitus, their counsels and assistance were considered of peculiar value by the Commonwealth. For, when some of the sterner old moralists wished to exclude women from all participation in public affairs, the Senate, after a heated debate, decided by a large majority that the coöperation of women in questions of administration, far from being a menace, as some contended, was so beneficial to the state that it should be continued. [Pg 24]

Among other noteworthy makers of Roman history, besides those just mentioned, is Livia, the wife of Augustus and the mother of Tiberius. So great was her influence and so persistent was her activity in government affairs, that it is sometimes asserted that she was the prime mover of most of the public acts of both these rulers. This woman, whom Ovid describes as having the features of Venus and the manner of Juno, and who, he declares, "held her head above all vices," was credited with having the benevolence of Ceres, the purity of Diana and the wisdom and craft of Minerva—"a woman," as was said by one of her contemporaries, "in all things more comparable to the gods than to men, who knew how to use her power so as to turn away peril and advance the most deserving."

Then there was the gracious, the virtuous, the self-sacrificing Octavia, sister of the Emperor Augustus, who was so successful in composing grave differences between her brother and her husband, and who so exerted her influence for peace during the troublous times in which she lived that she lives in history as a peacemaker. In marked contrast to this gentle and sympathetic woman was the energetic and heroic Agrippina, the wife of Germanicus. In many respects she was the most commanding personality of her age, and exhibited in an eminent degree those sterling qualities which we are wont to associate with the strong, [Pg 25] dignified, courageous women of ancient Rome, who gave to the world so many and so great men in every sphere of human endeavor. "She was," as Tacitus informs us, "a greater power in the army than legates and commanders, and she, a woman, had quelled a mutiny which the emperor's authority could not check."[21] She was, indeed, as has well been said, "a woman to whom one might address an epic but never a sonnet."

I have referred to these distinguished women because they are embodiments of the best types of the noble, patrician families who made the great Roman empire the admiration of all time, and because they exhibit the wonderful advance that had been made in the general status of women since the days of Pericles and Aspasia. I have referred to them, also, to show what women are capable of achieving in the difficult and complicated affairs of public life, when they are accorded the necessary freedom of action and when they are properly equipped for work by education and by association with men of learning and experience. Comparing the secluded and illiterate Greek wife with the free and highly accomplished Roman matron, we find almost as much difference between the two as there is between a child and a fully developed woman—all the difference there was between the unsophisticated young wife, not quite fifteen, of whom Xenophon gives us such a charming picture,[22] and the highly educated and competent mother of the Gracchi.

Of the Greek maiden we are told that, before her marriage she "had been most carefully brought up to see and hear as little as possible and to ask the fewest questions"; that her whole experience before her marriage "consisted in knowing how to take the wool and make a dress, and in seeing how her mother's handmaidens had their daily spinning tasks [Pg 26] assigned to them." Cornelia, on the contrary, was not only, as we have seen, highly accomplished, but also one who, after her husband's death, was quite prepared, as Plutarch assures us, to undertake the management of the extensive property which he left his family, and who, we may well believe, would also have been qualified, had the occasion demanded it, to perform with distinction the same duties that fell to the lot of the gifted wives of Germanicus and Augustus.

Nothing in the history of Greek and Roman womanhood more strikingly illustrates than the two instances given the vast difference in the status of the wives of Greece and Rome, or exhibits more clearly the advantages accruing to early training and thorough mental development. If there was any difference in talent or intellect between the Greek and the Roman woman it was, so far as we can determine, in favor of the Greek. The sole reason, then, for such a marked difference in their capacity for work and for achieving distinction in intellectual and administrative fields of action arose from the lack of education in the Athenian wife and the fullest measure of educational freedom enjoyed by the Roman. That

Aspasia, in spite of all the odds against her, was able to rise to such a pinnacle of glory does not prove that she was the superior of her countrywomen—the mothers of the greatest poets, artists and philosophers of all time—but it exhibits rather her good fortune in being able to effect a partnership with the greatest statesman of Greece, and one who was at the same time fully able to appreciate all her rare mental attainments and give her marvelous genius free scope for development by coöperating with him in making the period during which he held the reign of power the most brilliant one in the annals of human progress.

Plato, referring to the oriental seclusion to which Athenian wives were condemned, speaks of them as "a race used to living out of the sunshine," and that, too, among a people that [Pg 27] habitually lived out of doors. We have already seen how much greater freedom Roman women enjoyed and how much more important was the rôle they played in public as well as private life; but we have not told all. They not only went to, but presided over, public games and religious ceremonies. They were admitted to aristocratic clubs and had, under the empire, a regular assembly or senate of their own, known as the *Conventus Matronarum*. Hortensia, the daughter of the great orator Hortensius, pleaded the cause of her sex before the tribunal of the triumvirs, and so eloquent and effective was her speech that she not only won her case, but also won the praise of the critic, Quintilian, for her splendid oratorical effort.

Yet more. A certain woman in the Roman possessions in Africa had so impressed her fellow citizens by her intellectual capacity and administrative ability that she was chosen as one of the two chief magistrates of the place. She is known in history as Messia Castula, *duumvira*. It is true that the men of the older school, who would limit woman's activities to the distaff and the loom, strongly objected to the increasing freedom and power of women, and endeavored to counteract their influence; but all to no purpose. And it was the crabbed old Cato, the Censor, who growled in undisguised disgust:—"We Romans rule over all men and our wives rule over us."

But great as were the freedom and educational advantages of the Roman women, the startling fact remains that, with the exception of a few fragmentary verses of slight merit and of questionable authenticity, we have absolutely no tangible evidence of the Roman woman's literary ability while under pagan influence. We have seen, in considering her intellectual attainments—especially after the introduction of Greek art and letters into the City of the Seven Hills—that every woman who pretended to culture was obliged to be [Pg 28] familiar with the Greek as well as with the Latin authors, that her education was deemed incomplete without a knowledge of Greek poetry, oratory, history and philosophy, but the fact is indisputable that Roman women were not producers like their Greek sisters, and that in no instance did their productions reach anything like the supreme excellence of the creations of a Corinna or a Sappho. There was, it is true, Sulpicia, of whom Martial writes: "Let every girl, whose wish it is to please a single man, read Sulpicia; let every man, whose wish it is to please a single maid, read Sulpicia;" but, if the few amatory verses that are credited to her represent the highest flights of the Roman women in the domain of poetry, then, indeed, were they far behind not only Sappho and Corinna, but also far behind scores of their pupils. Martial does indeed speak of a young maiden in whom were combined the eloquence of Plato with the austere philosophy of the Porch, and who wrote verses worthy of a chaste Sappho; but this was evidently a great exaggeration, for we have no other evidence of her existence.

The creative work of Roman women was, so far as we are able to judge, quite as limited in prose as it was in poetry. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, was one of the few prose writers whose name has come down to us. From her memoirs it was that Tacitus received much of the material incorporated in his *Annals*.

That some of the women had literary ability of a high order is indicated by a letter of Pliny to one of his correspondents, in which occurs the following passage:

"Pomponius Saturninus recently read me some letters which he averred had been written by his wife. I believed that Plautus or Terence was being read in prose. Whether they were really his wife's, as he maintains, or his own, which he denies, he deserves equal honor, either because he composes them or because he has made his wife, whom he married when a mere girl, so learned and so polished."[23] [Pg 29]

Scarcely less distinguished for her taste in literature, and for her talent as a letter writer, was Pliny's wife, Calphurnia, who, at his request, wrote to him in his absence every day and sometimes even twice a day. According to Cicero, his daughter Tulia was "the best and most learned of women"; but her literary work, it is probable, did not extend much beyond her letters to her illustrious father. Nevertheless, what would we not give to possess these letters —to have as complete a collection of them as we have of those of the great orator and philosopher. They would be of inestimable value and would be absolutely beyond compare, except, possibly, with the letters of Mme. du Deffand or of Elizabeth Barrett Browning of a much later age.

Considering the number of educated women that lived in the latter days of the Republic and during the earlier part of the Empire, and their well known culture and love of letters, it is reasonable to suppose that they may have written much in both prose and verse of which we have no record. Literary productions must have more than ordinary value to survive two thousand years, and especially two thousand years of such revolutions and upheavals as have convulsed the world since the time of the *Pax Romana*, when all the world was at peace under Augustus.

How much of the literary work of the women of to-day will receive recognition twenty centuries hence? Some of it may, it is true, find a place in the fireproof libraries of the time; but who, outside of a few antiquarians, will take the trouble to read it or estimate its value? A few anthologies containing our gems of prose and poetry will probably be all that our fortieth century readers will deem worthy of notice. In view of the chaotic condition of Europe for so many centuries, the wonder is not that we have so little of the literary remains of Greece and Rome, but rather that we have anything at all. [Pg 30]

As one might expect, the literary women of Rome, as well as those who ventured to take part in public affairs, had their critics. The satirists of the time were as unsparing of their ridicule as they were long afterward when Molière wrote his *Femmes Savantes* and his *Précieuses Ridicules*. And as for men of the old conservative type, a learned woman was as much an object of horror as is a militant suffragette in conservative England to-day. "No learned wife for me," exclaims Martial, "but rather a well-fed slave."[24]

And Juvenal had no more love for educated women than have some of our contemporaries for a blue-stocking housekeeper. He gives his opinion of them in the following characteristic fashion:

"That woman is a worse nuisance than usual who, as soon as she reclines on her couch, praises Virgil; makes excuses for doomed Dido; pits bards against one another and compares them, and weighs Homer and Mars in the balance. Teachers of literature give way, professors are vanquished, the whole mob is hushed, and so great is the torrent of words that no lawyer or auctioneer may speak, nor any other woman."[25]

But if learned women had their enemies and detractors they also had friends and defenders. Among these was the Stoic philosopher, C. Musonius Rufus, who lived in the time of Nero. Like Plato, he contended that women should have the same training as men and that the faculties of both should be equally developed. The gist of his teaching is contained in the statement that: [Pg 31]

"If the same virtues must pertain to men and women, it follows, necessarily, that the same training and education must be suitable for both."[26]

Our brief sketch of women's work in ancient Rome would be incomplete without some reference to the famous *Ecclesia Domestica*—Church of the Household—on the Aventine, and the distinguished women who were its chief ornaments. During the time of Pope Damasus, and not long before the sacking of Rome by Alaric, the *Ecclesia Domestica* was a kind of conventual home to which had retired, or in which were frequently gathered, some of the most noble and learned women of the city. Among the most notable of these were Marcella and her friends, Paula and Eustochium.

For beauty of character and nobility of purpose and rare mental endowments they recall the best traditions of a Cornelia or a Calphurnia, while so great was their purity of life and so unbounded was their charity to the poor and suffering that they were honored by being numbered among the saints of the early church. But what specially distinguished them among all the great women of the Roman world was their great and varied learning. In this respect they probably were far in advance of all their predecessors. For, in addition to a thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek literature, history and philosophy, they had, under the great theologian and orientalist, St. Jerome, become proficient in Hebrew and deeply versed in Scripture.

Special mention should be made of Paula and her daughter Eustochium; for it is probable that, had it not been for their influence on Jerome, and their active coöperation in his great life work, we should not have the Latin version of the Scriptures that is to-day known as the [Pg 32] Vulgate. This is evinced from the letters of the saint himself and from what we know of the lives of these two remarkable women, who, as St. Jerome informs us in the epitaph which he had engraved on Paula's tomb in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, were descended from the Scipios, the Gracchi and the Pauli on the mother's side, and on the father's side from the half-mythical kings of Sparta and Mycenæ.[27]

They aided him not only by their sympathy and by purchasing for him, often at a great price, the manuscripts he needed for his colossal undertaking, but also assisted him by their thorough knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew in translating the Sacred Books from the original Hebrew into Latin. So great was Jerome's confidence in their scholarship and so high was his appreciation of their ability and judgment that he did not hesitate to submit his translations to them for their criticism and approval. After he had completed his version of the first Book of Kings, he turned it over to them, saying: "Read my Book of Kings—read also the Latin and Greek translations and compare them with my version." And they did read and compare and criticise. And more than this, they frequently suggested modifications and corrections which the great man accepted with touching humility and incorporated in a revised copy.

More wonderful still, the Latin Psalter, as it has come down to us, is not, as is generally supposed, the translation from the Hebrew of Jerome, but rather a corrected version made [Pg 33] from the Septuagint by his illustrious collaborators—Paula and Eustochium.

It is safe to say that no two women were ever engaged in a more important or more difficult literary undertaking—one requiring keener critical sense or more profound learning—than were Paula and Eustochium, or one in which their efforts were crowned with more brilliant success than were those of these two supreme exemplars of the grace, the knowledge, the culture, the refinement of Roman womanhood—the crowning glories of womanhood throughout the ages.

St. Jerome showed his grateful recognition of the invaluable assistance received from his devoted and talented co-workers by dedicating to them a great number of his most important books. This scandalized the pharisaical men of the time, who looked askance at

all learned women and resented particularly the preëminence given to Paula and her accomplished daughter. But their reproaches provoked a reply from the saint that was worthy of the most chivalrous champion of woman, and revealed, at the same time, all the nobility of soul of the roused "Lion of Bethlehem." It is not only a defence of his course, but also a splendid tribute to his two illustrious friends, and a tribute also to the great and good women of all time.

"There are people, O Paula and Eustochium," exclaims the Christian Cicero, vibrant with emotion and in a burst of eloquence that recalls one of the burning philippics of Marcus Tullius, "who take offence at seeing your names at the beginning of my works. These people do not know that Olda prophesied when the men were mute; that while Barach was atremble, Deborah saved Israel; that Judith and Esther delivered from supreme peril the children of God. I pass over in silence Anna and Elizabeth and the other holy women of the Gospel, but humble stars when compared with the great luminary, Mary. Shall I speak now of the illustrious women among the heathen? Does not Plato have Aspasia speak in his [Pg 34] dialogues? Does not Sappho hold the lyre at the same time as Alcæus and Pindar? Did not Themista philosophize with the sages of Greece? And the mother of the Gracchi, your Cornelia, and the daughter of Cato, wife of Brutus, before whom pale the austere virtue of the father and the courage of the husband—are they not the pride of the whole of Rome? I shall add but one word more. Was not it women to whom our Lord first appeared after His resurrection? Yes, men could then blush for not having sought what the women had found." [28]

Time has spared a joint letter of Paula and Eustochium to their friend Marcella—a letter which exhibits so well the rare culture and literary ability of the writers that we cannot but lament that we have not more of the correspondence which was carried on between the learned inmates of the Church of the Household on the Aventine and Paula's convent home near the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Such a collection would be beyond price, as it would complete the picture of the age so well sketched by St. Jerome; and, as a contribution to the literary world, it would have a value not inferior to that of those exquisite classics of a later age—the letters of Madame Sevigné to her daughter.[29]

WOMAN AND EDUCATION DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

The period of nearly a thousand years intervening between the downfall of Rome in A.D. 476 and the taking of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 is usually known in history as the [Pg 35] Middle Ages. By some it is considered as synonymous with the Dark Ages, because of the decline of learning and civilization during this long interval of time. The former designation seems preferable, for, as we shall see, the latter is more or less misleading. During the "wandering of the nations" in the fourth and fifth centuries, and the long and fierce struggles between the barbarian hordes from the north with the decadent peoples of the once great Roman empire, there was, no doubt, a partial eclipse of the sun of civilization; but the consequent darkness was not so dense nor so general and long-continued as is sometimes imagined. The progress of intellectual culture was, indeed, greatly retarded, but there was no time when the light of learning was entirely extinguished. For even during the most troublous times there were centers of culture in one part of Europe or another. At one time the center was in Italy, at another in Gaul, and, at still another, it was in Britain or Ireland or Germany.

But whether it was in the south, or the west or the north of Europe that letters flourished, it was always the convent or the monastery that was the home of learning and culture. Within these holy precincts the literary treasures of antiquity were preserved and multiplied. Here monks and nuns labored and studied, always keeping lighted the sacred torch of knowledge —*Et quasi cursores vitaï lampada tradunt*—and passing it on to the generations that

succeeded them. That any of the great literary masterpieces of Greece and Rome have come to us, in spite of the destructive agencies of time and the wreck of empires, is due wholly to the unremitting toil through long ages of the zealous and intelligent inmates of the cloister.

Of the monastic institutions for men there is no occasion to speak, except in so far as they contributed to the intellectual advancement of woman. In some cases the women of the cloister owed much to ecclesiastics for their literary training; but there are not wanting [Pg 36] instances in which the nuns took the lead in education and had the direction of schools which gave to the church priests and bishops of recognized scholarship.

Practically the only schools for girls during the Middle Ages were the convents. Here were educated rich and poor, gentle and simple. And in these homes of piety and learning the inmates enjoyed a peace and a security that it was impossible to find elsewhere. They were free from the dangers and annoyances that so often menaced them in their own homes and were able to pursue their studies under the most favorable auspices.

Among the first convent schools to achieve distinction were those of Arles and Poitiers in Gaul, in the latter part of the sixth century. The Abbess of Poitiers is known to us as St. Radegund. She not only had a knowledge of letters rare for her age, but wrote poems of such merit that they were until recently accepted as the productions of her master, the poet Fortunatus,[30] who subsequently became bishop of Poitiers.

Far more notable, however, than the convents of Arles and Poitiers was the celebrated convent of St. Hilda at Whitby. Hilda, the foundress and first abbess of Whitby, was a princess of the blood-royal and a grand-niece of Edwin, the first Christian king of Northumbria. Her convent and adjoining monastery for monks soon became the most noted center of learning and culture in Britain. And so great was her reputation for knowledge and wisdom that not only priests and bishops, but also princes and kings sought her counsel in important matters of church and state.

As to the monks subject to her authority, she inspired them with so great a love of knowledge, and urged them to so thorough a study of the Scriptures, that her monastery [Pg 37] became, as Venerable Bede informs us, a school not only for missionaries but for bishops as well. He speaks in particular of six ecclesiastical dignitaries who were sent forth from this noble institution—all of whom were bishops. Five of them he describes as men of singular merit and sanctity—"*singularis meriti et sanctitatis viros*," while the sixth, he declared, was a man of rare ability and learning—"*doctissimus et excellentis ingenii*." Of this number was St. John of Beverly, who, we are told, "attained a degree of popularity rare even in England, where the saints of old were so universally and so readily popular."[31] Hilda governed her double monastery with singular wisdom and success; and, so great was the love and veneration she inspired among all classes that she merited the epithet of "Mother of her Country."

Celebrated, however, as Hilda was for her great educational work at Whitby, she is probably better known to the world as the one who first recognized and fostered the rare gifts of the poet Cædmon. "It is on the lips of this cowherd," as Montalembert beautifully expresses it, "that the Anglo-Saxon speech first bursts into poetry. Indeed, nothing in the whole history of European literature is more original or more religious than this first utterance of the English muse."[32]

As soon as Hilda discovered the extraordinary poetic faculty of Cædmon, she did not hesitate to regard it "as a special gift of God, worthy of all respect and of the most tender care." And, in order that she might the more readily develop the splendid talents of this literary prodigy, the keen discerning abbess received Cædmon into the monastery of monks, and had him translate the entire Bible into Anglo-Saxon. "As soon as the Sacred Text was

read for him he forthwith," as Bede declares, "ruminated it as a clean animal ruminates its food, and transformed it into songs so beautiful that all who heard were delighted." [Pg 38]

As his poetical faculty became more developed, his profoundly original genius became more marked, and his inspiration more earnest and impassioned. It was this Northumbrian cowherd, transformed into a monk of Whitby, who sang before the abbess Hilda the revolt of Satan and Paradise Lost, a thousand years earlier than Milton, in verses which may still be admired even beside the immortal poem of the British Homer. So remarkable, indeed, in some instances is the similarity in the productions of the two poets that F. Palgrave, one of the most competent of English critics, does not hesitate to declare that certain of Cædmon's verses resembled so closely certain passages of the Paradise Lost that some of Milton's lines seem almost like a translation from the work of his distinguished predecessor. And M. Taine, in his *History of English Literature*, referring to the "string of short, accumulated, passionate images, like a succession of lightning flashes," of the old Anglo-Saxon poet, asserts that "Milton's Satan exists in Cædmon's as the picture exists in the sketch."[33]

Well could Cædmon's first biographer, the Venerable Bede, say of him, "Many Englishmen after him have tried to compose religious poems, but no one has ever equaled the man who had only God for a master." And not without warrant does the eloquent Montalembert, in the masterly work just quoted, pen the following statement: "Apart from the interest which attaches to Cædmon from a historical and literary point of view, his life discloses to us essential peculiarities in the outward organization and intellectual life of those great communities which in the seventh century studded the coast of Northumbria, and which, with all their numerous dependents, found often a more complete development under the crozier of such a woman as Hilda than under the superiors of the other sex."[34] [Pg 39]

Space precludes my telling of other convents which were centers of literary activity, and of nuns who distinguished themselves by their learning and by the benign influence which they exerted far beyond the walls of the cloister. I cannot, however, refrain from referring to that group of learned English nuns who are chiefly known by their Latin correspondence with St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, and by the assistance which they gave him in his arduous labors. Conspicuous among these was St. Lioba, who, at the request of Boniface, left her home in England to found a convent at Bischopsheim in Germany, which, under the direction of its learned and zealous abbess, soon became the most important educational center in that part of Europe. Teachers were formed here for other schools in Germany and Lioba's biographer tells us that there were few *monasteria feminarum*—monasteries of women—within the sphere of Boniface's missionary activities for which Lioba's pupils were not sought as instructresses.

Like her illustrious countrywoman, St. Hilda, the abbess of Bischopsheim was the friend and counselor of spiritual and temporal rulers. Charlemagne, that eminent patron of scholars, had a great admiration for her and gave her many substantial proofs of his esteem and veneration. "Princes," writes her biographer, "loved her, noblemen received her, and bishops gladly entertained her and conversed with her on the Scriptures and on the institutions of religion, for she was familiar with many writings and careful in giving advice. She was so bent on reading that she never laid aside her book except to pray or to strengthen her slight frame with food or sleep."[35] She was thoroughly conversant with the books of the Old and the New Testaments and was, at the same time, familiar with the writings of the Fathers. It is not surprising, then, that she was regarded as an oracle, and that all classes flocked to her as they did to the abbess of Whitby for guidance and assistance. [Pg 40]

From what has been said of the accomplishments and achievements of the Anglo-Saxon nuns just mentioned, it is evident that they were, of a truth, women of exceptional worth and of sterling character. And it is equally clear that their pupils must have shared in the education and culture of their distinguished teachers.[36] Many of them, in addition to

having a wide acquaintance with literature, sacred and profane, were also mistresses of several languages. A woman's education, at this time, was not complete unless she could write Latin and speak it fluently. The author of that most interesting early English work, *Ancren Riwle*—Rule of Anchoresses—presupposes in his auditors, for whose benefit his instructions were given, a knowledge of Latin and French, as well as of English. In certain convents Latin was almost the sole medium of communication,—to such an extent, indeed, that a special rule was made prohibiting "the use of the Latin tongue except under special circumstances." [Pg 41]

"As long as the conventual system lasted the only schools for girls in England were the convent schools where, says Robert Aske, 'the daughters of gentlemen were brought up in virtue.' From an educational point of view, the suppression of the convents was decidedly a blunder." Thus writes Georgiana Hill in her instructive work on *Women in English Life*, and there are, we fancy, but few readers of her instructive pages who will not be inclined to agree with her conclusions.[37] Lecky speaks of the dissolution of convents at the time of the Reformation as "far from a benefit to women or the world."[38] And Dom Gasquet declares "that destruction by Henry VIII of the conventual schools where the female population, the rich as well as the poor, found their only teachers, was the absolute extinction of any systematic education of women for a long period."[39]

But this is not all. The strangest and saddest result, consequent on the suppression of the convents, was that men were made to profit by the loss which women had sustained. The revenues of the houses that were suppressed had been intended for the sole use and behoof of women, and had been administered by them in this sense for centuries. When they were appropriated by Henry VIII, it never occurred to him or his ministers to make any provision for the education of women in lieu of that which had so ruthlessly been wrested from them. Thus the nunnery of St. Radegund, together with its revenues and possessions, was transformed into Jesus College, Cambridge, while from the suppressed convents of Bromhall in Berkshire and Lillechurch in Kent funds were secured for the foundation and endowment of St. John's College, also at Cambridge. Similarly, the properties of other nunneries, large and small, were appropriated for the foundation of collegiate institutions at Oxford, all of which were for the benefit of men. [Pg 42]

And so it was that, in a few short years, the great work of centuries was undone and women were left little better educational facilities than when the Anglo-Saxon nuns began their noble work in a land that was enveloped in "one dark night of unillumined barbarism."

One would have thought that Elizabeth, who was so highly educated, and who did so much for the supremacy of her country on land and sea, would have bethought herself of the necessity of doing something for the education of her female subjects. But no. She did nothing for them, and the founders of the endowed grammar schools, during her reign, gave never a thought to the educational necessities of the girls. They made provision only for the boys. In this respect, however, the "Virgin Queen" was but following in the footsteps of the male sovereigns and legislators who had preceded her, and who, although affecting an interest in having women "sensible and virtuous, seem by their conduct toward the sex to have entered into a general conspiracy to order it otherwise."

The truth is, when anything was achieved for the intellectual advancement of women it was due either to private instruction or to the result of a protracted struggle on the part of women themselves for what they deemed their indefeasible rights. Had they relied on the spontaneous action of men and on legislation in favor of female education to which men had given the initiative, they would to-day be in the same condition of ignorance and seclusion and servitude as was the Athenian woman twenty-five centuries ago, and would occupy a status but little above that of the inmates of oriental harems and zenanas.

The Anglo-Saxon nuns were, as we have seen, specially distinguished for their learning and for the splendid work they performed for the education of their sex during the long period of the Middle Ages. But however great their preëminence in these respects, they were not without rivals. There were, besides the schools, already named, conducted by St. Lioba and her companions, also flourishing schools in Germany under the direction of native nuns, whose success as educators was as marked as that of Lioba or Hilda, and who, in addition to their labors in the class-room, achieved distinction by their productive work. The Anglo-Saxon convents developed few writers, whereas those of Germany produced several who not only shed luster on their sex but who also showed what woman is capable of accomplishing when accorded some measure of encouragement and full liberty of action. [Pg 43]

One of the most noted writers of her age was the famous nun of Gandersheim, Hroswitha, who was born in the early part of the tenth century. She was the pupil of the abbess Gerberg, who was of royal lineage, and one of the most zealous promoters of learning and culture in Saxony during the forty-two years of her rule in the convent to which she and her favorite pupil gave undying renown.

Hroswitha's literary work consists of legends and contemporary history in metrical form and of her dramas written in the style of Terence. As a writer of history and legends she ranks with the best authors of her time, while as a writer of dramas she stands absolutely alone. Hers, indeed, were the first dramatic compositions given to the world during the long interval that elapsed between the last comedies of classic antiquity and the first of the miracle plays which had such a vogue between the twelfth and the sixteenth century.

Her dramas, which, of all her works, have attracted the most attention, are seven in number. They deal with the moral and mental conflicts which characterized the period of transition from heathendom to Christianity. Some of them exhibit poetic talent of a high order as well as the inspiration and courage of genius. They reveal also a wide acquaintance with the classic authors of Rome and Greece, besides a knowledge of many of the Christian writers. They are, likewise, distinguished by originality of treatment, complete mastery of the material used, as well as by genuine beauty of rhyme and rhythm. In form, all the plays preserve the simple directness of their model, Terence, while, in conception, they embody the noblest ideals of Christian teaching. In marked contrast to her model, who invariably exhibits the frailties and lapses of woman, Hroswitha's plays turn on the resistance of her sex to temptation, and on their steadfast adherence to duty and to vows voluntarily assumed. A recent English writer, W. H. Hudson, in an appreciative estimate of the work of this learned Benedictine nun expresses himself as follows: [Pg 44]

"It is on the literary side alone that Hroswitha belongs to the classic school. The spirit and essence of her work belong entirely to the Middle Ages; for beneath the rigid garb of a dead language"—she wrote in Latin—"beats the warm heart of a new era. Everything in her plays that is not formal but essential, everything that is original and individual, belongs wholly to the Christianized Germany of the tenth century. Everywhere we can trace the influence of the atmosphere in which she lived; every thought and every motive is colored by the spiritual conditions of her time. The keynote of all her works is the conflict of Christianity with paganism; and it is worthy of remark that in Hroswitha's hands Christianity is throughout represented by the purity and gentleness of woman, while paganism is embodied in what she describes as the vigor of men—*virile robur*."[40]

Among her legends the one entitled *The Lapse and Conversion of Theophilus* has a special interest as being the precursor of the well-known legend of Faust. [Pg 45]

In Hroswitha's time, as in our own, there were people who were strongly opposed to the higher education of women. There were others who would deny them even the elements of an education—who declared that they should be taught anything rather than reading and writing, which were a cause of temptation and sin—that their knowledge should be confined

solely to the duties of an ordinary housewife, that their books should consist solely of thimble, thread and needles—"*Et leurs livres, un dé, du fil et des aguilles.*" Some, it is true, were willing to make an exception in favor of nuns; but, as to all others, the less they knew the better it was for their spiritual, if not for their temporal, welfare also.[41] To those who were thus minded, Hroswitha pithily replied that it was not knowledge itself but the bad use of it that was dangerous—"*Nec scientia scibilis Deum offendit, sed injustitia scientis.*"

Among other women who were Hroswitha's equals in knowledge, if not in literary attainments, were several other nuns who illumined the closing centuries of the Middle Ages. Chief among these were St. Hildegard, "the sybil of the Rhine"; Herrad, the noted author of the *Hortus Deliciarum—Garden of Delights*—and Matilda and Gertrude, those [Pg 46] remarkable mystical writers, whose descriptions of heaven and hell so closely resemble those in the *Divina Commedia* that many writers are of the opinion that the great Florentine poet must have been familiar with the accounts which they gave of their visions.

St. Hildegard was for a third of a century the abbess of the convent of St. Rupert at Bingen. So great was her reputation for sanctity and for the extent and variety of her attainments that she was called "the marvel of Germany." She is without doubt one of the most beautiful and imposing as well as one of the greatest figures of the Middle Ages—great beside such eminent contemporaries as Abelard, Martin of Tours and Bernard of Clairvaux. People from all parts of the Christian world sought her counsel; and her convent at Bingen became a Mecca for all classes and conditions of men and women. But nothing shows better the immense influence which she wielded than her letters of which nearly three hundred have been preserved.

Among her correspondents were people of the humble walks of life as well as the highest representatives of Church and State. There were simple monks and noble abbots; dukes, kings and queens; archbishops and cardinals and no fewer than four Popes. Letters came to her from the orient and the occident, from the patriarch of Jerusalem, from Queen Bertha of Greece, from Frederick Barbarossa, Philip the Count of Flanders, St. Bernard, the professors of the University of Paris; from Henry II of England, and from his grand-daughter Eleonora, "The Damsel of Brittany." It is safe to say that no woman during the Middle Ages exercised a wider or more beneficent influence than did this humble Benedictine abbess of Bingen on the Rhine and had unsought so large a number of distinguished correspondents. And, if we accept the criterion that influence is measured by the number and nature of one's relations, it would be difficult to find in any age relations [Pg 47] that were more select or more cosmopolitan.

But her astonishing collection of letters is the slightest product of her intellectual activity. She is without doubt the most voluminous woman writer of the Middle Ages. Her works on theology, Scripture and science make no less than six or eight large octavo volumes. The Bollandists, than whom there is no more competent authority, express their amazement at the amount and quality of Hildegard's work. Witness the following language of one of their number: "Although we may not be surprised that our saint was interrogated regarding secret things by so many men eminent both by reason of their dignity and their learning, I am nevertheless forced to recognize with stupefaction that a woman without instruction, and who had not acquired knowledge by study, was consulted concerning the most difficult questions of theology and the most subtle of Holy Scriptures, and that she gave, without hesitation, the answers that were demanded by theology and Scripture."[42]

Is it, then, surprising that the famous William of Auxerre, after a critical examination of her works, should compare her with Peter Lombard, the celebrated "Master of the Sentences," [43] and one of the most learned of the Schoolmen, and write that Hildegard is *Sententiarum* [Pg 48] *Magistra*—Mistress of the Sentences—and that "in her works the words are not human but

divine"? Has any woman writer ever received higher praise, and from one so competent to express an opinion as the scholarly divine of Auxerre?

Herrad, the gifted abbess of Hohenburg in Alsace, was a contemporary of Hildegard, and, like her, was noted for her culture and wide range of knowledge. She is chiefly known for her *Hortus Deliciarum*, a remarkable work, encyclopædic in character, which she wrote for the nuns of her convent and which was designed to embody in words and in pictures the knowledge of her age.

Nothing that time has bequeathed to us gives us a clearer conception of the manifold activities of a mediæval nunnery, of the industry, talents and enthusiastic love of learning of its inmates, than Herrad's wonderful *Garden of Delights*. Nor is there any other work that gives us a better knowledge of the manners, customs and ideals of the twelfth century, or one that, in its particular sphere, is of more value to the student of art, philology and archæology. It exhibits Herrad's intense interest in the intellectual advancement of her nuns and pupils as well as her superior talent and acquirements. Unfortunately the manuscript copy of this work was destroyed at the time of the bombardment of Strasburg by the Germans in 1870, and our knowledge of it is limited to portions of it which had previously been transcribed or to accounts left of it by those who had examined it before its destruction. Of such exceptional value was this unique work that the editor of the great [Pg 49] collection of pictures, which illustrates this remarkable book, does not hesitate to declare that "Few illuminated manuscripts had acquired a fame so well deserved as the *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrad."[44]

No sketch, however brief, of the literary nuns of mediæval Germany would be complete without some reference to the learned religious of the convent of Helfta, near Eisleben in Saxony. Of the abbess Gertrude we read that her enthusiasm for knowledge was so great that she not only inspired others with the same enthusiasm, but that she was an incessant collector of books, which she had her nuns transcribe. Among her most distinguished subjects were two religious by the name of Matilda, one of whom was her sister, and a third, who, to distinguish her from the abbess, is known as "Gertrude the Great."

The writings of these nuns were inspired by that great mystic movement which then prevailed in various parts of Europe and are among the most impassioned productions of the age. For this reason they still have a special claim on the attention of students of art and literature, as well as those of theology and mysticism. Impressed by the similarity of their ideas and descriptions as compared with those found in Dante's great masterpiece, there are [Pg 50] not wanting scholars who contend that the prototype of the Matelda in the earthly paradise of the *Purgatorio* was none other than one of the Matildas of the famous convent of Helfta. [45]

The writings of Hroswitha, Hildegard, Herrad, Gertrude and the Matildas, to speak of no others, are the best evidence of the studious character of the nuns of mediæval times, and of their devotion to the cause of education. They command, likewise, our admiration for the system of training which made such development possible, and show that, in certain departments, the schools as then conducted were on as high a plane as any we have to-day. [46] They show us, too, that nuns and convent-bred women of the age in question were of quite different mental calibre from that of the "gentle lady of chivalry living in her bower, playing upon her lute and waiting patiently for the return of her triumphant knight," and [Pg 51] quite different, too, from that of the castle lady-loves—whose sole attractions were often no more than youth and beauty—who inspired the impassioned lyrics of troubadour and minnesinger.

A recent writer sums up in a few words the status and the accomplishments of the lady of the abbey in the following paragraph:

"No institution of Europe has ever won for the lady the freedom and development that she enjoyed in the convent in early days. The modern college for women only feebly reproduces it, since the college for women has arisen at a time when colleges in general are under a cloud. The lady-abbess, on the other hand, was part of the two great social forces of her time, feudalism and the Church. Great spiritual rewards and great worldly prizes were alike within her grasp. She was treated as an equal by the men of her class, as is witnessed by letters we still have from popes and emperors to abbesses. She had the stimulus of competition with men in executive capacity, in scholarship, and in artistic production, since her work was freely set before the general public; but she was relieved by the circumstances of her environment from the ceaseless competition in common life of woman with woman for the favor of the individual man. In the cloister of the great days, as on a small scale in the college for women to-day, women were judged by each other as men are everywhere judged by each other, for sterling qualities of head and heart and character."[47]

Nor is this all. Never was woman more highly honored, never was her power and influence greater than during the period of conventual life extending from Hilda of Whitby to Gertrude and the Matildas of Helfta, and especially during that golden period of monasticism and chivalry when cloister and court were the radiant centers of learning and culture. Abbesses took part in ecclesiastical synods and councils and assisted in the [Pg 52] deliberations of national assemblies. In England, they ranked with lords temporal and spiritual, and had the right to attend the king's council or to send proxies to represent them, while in Germany, where they held property directly from the king or emperor, they enjoyed the rights and privileges of barons and, as such, took part in the proceedings of the imperial diet either in person or through their accredited representatives. In Saxony, the abbesses had the right to strike coins bearing their own portraits, notably the abbesses of Gandersheim and Quedlinburg. In England they were invested with extraordinary powers, and in certain cases owed obedience to none save the Pope. In Kent abbesses, as representatives of religion, came immediately after bishops.

Possessing such power and prestige, it is not surprising to learn that abbesses wielded great influence in temporal as well as spiritual matters; that it pervaded politics and extended to the courts of kings and emperors. Thus, Matilda, the abbess of Quedlinburg, together with Adelheid, the mother of Otto III who was but three years old at the time of his father's death, practically ruled the empire. At a later period during the prolonged absence in Italy of Otto III, the control of affairs was entrusted to the abbess alone; and so successful was her administration, and so vigorous were the measures which she adopted against the invading Wends, that she commanded the admiration of all. In view of these facts, the learned authoress of *Woman Under Monasticism* is fully warranted in declaring as she does "The career open to the inmates of convents in England and on the Continent was greater than any other ever thrown open to women in the course of modern European history."[48]

"The educational influence of convents during centuries," continues the same writer, "cannot be rated too highly. Not only did their inmates attain considerable knowledge but [Pg 53] education in a nunnery, as we see from Chaucer and others, secured an improved standing for those who were not professed."[49] It prepared the way for, if it did not train, those highly educated women who appeared during the time of the transition between the Middle Ages and what is now designated as the Modern Period.

Among these were Christine de Pisan, who was a prolific writer on many subjects in both prose and verse, and who, it is said, was the first woman to earn a livelihood by her pen.[50] There were also some of those remarkable women who lectured on law in the University of Bologna, among whom were Bettina Gozzadini,[51] who, some writers will have it, occupied the chairs of law in her *alma mater* as early as 1236, and the celebrated Novella d'Andrea, of the following century, who frequently acted as a substitute for her father, a

professor of canon law in the university, and who, by reason of her varied and profound knowledge, held a prominent place among the most learned men of her time. Both of these noted women were worthy prototypes of that long list of learned Italian women who, during the Renaissance, won such honor for themselves and such undying glory for their country. Not less remarkable were several women of the school of Salerno, who, during its palmiest days, distinguished themselves as teachers, writers and medical practitioners,[52] and the still more remarkable daughters of one Mangord, a professor of Paris, whose daughters [Pg 54] taught Sacred Scripture.[53] There were few in number, it is true, but they were the worthy prototypes of those learned and brilliant women who achieved such distinction and glory for their sex during that most interesting period of history known as the Renaissance.

WOMAN AND EDUCATION DURING THE RENAISSANCE

By the Renaissance we understand not only a phase in the development of the nations of Europe but also that period of transition between the mediæval and the modern world during which the latent spiritual energies of the Middle Ages developed into the intellectual forces and moral habits of thought which now pervade the civilized world. Various dates are assigned for its starting point. Among them is the fall of Constantinople in 1453, when there was a great influx of scholars from the famed metropolis on the Bosphorus to the Italian peninsula, who brought with them those forgotten treasures of science and literature which [Pg 55] were so instrumental in producing that interesting phenomenon known in history as the Revival of Learning. But whatever date be assigned for the beginning of the Renaissance, whether it be the year when Constantinople fell into the hands of the Turk or the fateful millennial year which was to witness the termination of all things, there certainly was never at any period a distinct breach of historical continuity between the old order and the new.

This is particularly true of Italy where the Renaissance had its origin. For here, during the entire mediæval period, there never was a time when the study of antiquity was completely neglected; when the traditions of the old Roman culture had died out, or when the art and the literature of the classical ages of the past had ceased to exert an influence on artists and scholars. Ozanam was, then, right when he declared that the night of the Dark Age, which in Italy intervened between "the intellectual daylight of antiquity and the dawn of the Renaissance," was, in reality, like "one of those luminous nights in which the fading brightness of evening is prolonged into the first beaming of the morning."[54]

So much, indeed, was this the case that those who have made the most profound study of the Middle Ages recognize a first Renaissance in the twelfth century, which was not less real than the Renaissance *par excellence* of the fifteenth century, a renaissance which counts such masters of Latinity as Abelard, John of Salisbury and Hildebert of Tours, and such schools as that of Chartres, where classical Latin was taught with as much thoroughness as in the great universities of Europe during the brilliant age of the humanists. It was then, as Rashdall truly observes, that "a revival of architecture heralded, as it usually does, a wider [Pg 56] revival of Art. The schools of Christendom became thronged as they were never thronged before. A passion for enquiry took the place of the old routine. The Crusades brought different parts of Europe into contact with one another and into contact with the new world of the East—with a new religion and a new philosophy, with the Arabic Aristotle, with the Arabic commentators on Aristotle, and eventually even with Aristotle in the original Greek."[55]

Roughly speaking, the Renaissance attained its culmination during the second half of the fifteenth century. It was during this period that gunpowder and printing with movable types were invented—the first completely revolutionizing the methods of warfare and the second marvelously facilitating the diffusion of knowledge. And it was during the same period also

that Vasco da Gama doubled the Cape of Good Hope, that Columbus crossed the Sea of Darkness and that Copernicus laid the foundation of modern astronomy.

But this wonderful half-century constituted only a small portion of the period embraced by the Renaissance. From the fall of Constantinople until it attained the highest phase of development in England, the Renaissance covers a period of nearly two centuries. The progress of the intellectual and moral movement which it represented, from the land of its birth, to the northern and western parts of Europe, was comparatively slow. Thus, while Italy was exhibiting the full effulgence of the re-birth, England was still in the feudal condition of the Middle Ages. A striking illustration of this truth is seen in the fact that "a brother of the Black Prince banqueted with Petrarch in the palace of Galeazzo Visconti—that is to say, the founder of Italian humanism, the representative of Italian despotic state-craft, and the companion of Froissart's heroes met together at a marriage feast." "In Italy," as [Pg 57] Symonds has shown, "the keynote was struck by the *Novella*, as in England by the drama." [56] The supreme exponents of the Renaissance as manifested in literature were, without doubt, Ariosto in Italy, Rabelais in France, Cervantes in Spain, Camoens in Portugal, Erasmus in the Netherlands and Shakespeare in England.

Considering the splendid achievements of men during the Renaissance in every department of intellectual activity, one would imagine that women also would have attained to a somewhat proportionate distinction, at least in literature and the arts. But, outside of Italy, this was far from being the case. In France, Spain, Portugal and England there were, it is true, a certain number of women who won distinction by their talents and learning, but these were the exceptions which but served to throw into greater relief the prevailing ignorance of the great mass of their sex, which had few, if any, of the advantages of instruction, even in the most elementary branches of knowledge.

The Italian women, as we have already seen, had commanded marked recognition for their talents and learning even before the close of the Middle Ages. The most famous of these were among those who, having obtained the doctorate, became lecturers and professors in the great university of Bologna. The existence and accomplishments of some of these may, perhaps, be more or less legendary, but there can be no doubt that many of them, some before the time of the Renaissance, had gained a European reputation for the breadth and variety of their attainments. But it was during the Renaissance that the remarkable flowering of the intellect of the Italian woman was seen at its best. While the women in the other parts of Europe, especially in England and Germany, were suffering the ill effects consequent on the suppression of the convents, which, for centuries, had been almost the only schools [Pg 58] available for girls, the women of Italy were taking an active part in the great educational movement inaugurated by the revival of learning, and winning the highest honors for their sex in every department of science, art and literature. Not since the days of Sappho and Aspasia had woman attained such prominence, and never were they, irrespective of class-condition, accorded greater liberty, privileges or honor. The universities, which had been opened to them at the close of the Middle Ages, gladly conferred upon them the doctorate, and eagerly welcomed them to the chairs of some of their most important faculties. The Renaissance was, indeed, the heydey of the intellectual woman throughout the whole of the Italian peninsula—a time when woman enjoyed the same scholastic freedom as men, and when Mme. de Staël's dictum, *Le génie n'a pas de sexe*, expressed a doctrine admitted in practice and not an academic theory.

It would require a large volume, or rather many volumes, to do justice to the learned women of Italy who conferred such honor upon their sex during the period we are considering. Suffice it to mention a few of those who achieved special distinction and whose memories are still green in the land which had been made so illustrious by their talent and genius.

That which the modern reader finds the most surprising in the Italian women of the Renaissance is their enthusiasm for the *literæ humaniores*—the Latin and Greek classics—and the proficiency which so many of them, even at an early age, attained in the literature and philosophy of antiquity. It was no uncommon thing for a girl in her teens to write and speak Latin, while many of them were almost equally familiar with Greek.[57] Thus Laura Brenzoni, of Verona, had such a mastery of these two languages that she wrote and spoke [Pg 59] them with ease, while Alessandra Scala was so familiar with them that she employed them in writing poetry. Lorenza Strozzi, who was educated in a convent and eventually became a nun, was distinguished for her great versatility, for her profound knowledge of science and art, as well as for her proficiency in Latin and Greek. Her Latin poems were so highly valued that they were translated into foreign languages. Livia Chiavello, of Fabriano, was celebrated as one of the most brilliant representatives of the Petrarchan school. Her style was so pure and noble that, had Petrarch not lived, she alone would have upheld the honor of the vulgar tongue. So successful was Isotta of Rimini in the cultivation of the Muses that she was hailed as another Sappho. Cassandra Fedele, of Venice, deserved, according to Polizian, the noted Florentine humanist, to be ranked with that famous universal genius, Pico de la Mirandola. So extensive were her attainments that in addition to being a thorough mistress of Latin and Greek, she was likewise distinguished in music, eloquence, philosophy and even theology. Leo X, Louis XII of France, and Isabella of Spain were eager to have her as an ornament for their courts, but the Venetian senate was so proud of its treasure that it was unwilling to have her depart. Catarina Cibo, of Genoa, was another [Pg 60] prodigy of learning; for, besides a knowledge of Latin and Greek, philosophy and theology, she was well acquainted with Hebrew. Donna Felice Rasponi, of Ravenna, devoted herself to the study of Plato and Aristotle, of Scripture and the Fathers. But, for the extent and variety of her attainments, Tarquinia Molza seems to have eclipsed all her contemporaries. She had as teachers the ablest scholars of an age of distinguished scholars. Not only did she excel in poetry and the fine arts, but she also had a rare knowledge of astronomy and mathematics, Latin, Greek and Hebrew. And so great was the esteem in which she was held that the senate of Rome conferred on her the singular honor of Roman citizenship, transmissible in perpetuity to her descendants. The Sovereign Pontiff and the flower of the Roman prelacy begged her to take up her residence in the Eternal City, but she could not be prevailed upon to leave the land of her birth.

In the arts of sculpture and painting the women of Italy, during the Renaissance, were no less illustrious than they were in science, literature and philosophy. Indeed, many of the treasures in the Italian churches and art galleries that still delight all lovers of the beautiful are from the chisel and the brush of women who achieved distinction between three and four centuries ago.[58]

Probably the most famous sculptress was Properzia de Rossi, whose ability was so remarkable that she excited the envy of the men who were her competitors.[59] Among painters there was Suor Plantilla Nelli, who was a nun and prioress in the convent of Santa Catarina in Florence. Both Lanzi and Vasari bestow high praise on her work and declare some of her productions to be of rare excellence. There were also Maria Angela Crisculo, of [Pg 61] whose splendid work many examples are still preserved in the churches of Naples, and Lavinia Fontana of Bologna, who exhibited such extraordinary ability as an artist that some of her pictures passed for the work of her great contemporary, Guido Reni.[60] Still more remarkable were the achievements of four sisters of the noted family Anguisciola of Cremona. So admirable was the work of the eldest sister, Sofonisba, that Philip II invited her to his court in Spain, where she excited the amazement of every one by the splendid canvases which she executed for her illustrious patron and for the members of the royal family.

Of the fifty female poets who flourished in Italy during the Renaissance the most eminent were Gaspara Stampa, Veronica Gambara, and Vittoria Colonna. Of such merit and exquisite finish were the productions of their Muse that they are still read with never failing pleasure. So highly did Cardinal Bembo,—the famous "dictator of letters"—value the scholarship and critical acumen of Veronica Gambara that he never published anything without previously submitting it to her judgment. But far more eminent as a poet was the noble and accomplished Marchesa of Pescara, Vittoria Colonna, who, on account of her talents and virtues, was named *La Divina*. The friend and adviser of scholars and the confidante of princes, she represented, as has truly been said, "the best phases of the Renaissance, its learning, its intelligence, its enthusiasm, its subtle Platonism, combined with a profound religious faith and the trace of the mysticism of a simpler age." The chorus of universal praise which was sung by her contemporaries is well echoed by Ariosto when he writes of her: "She has not only made herself immortal by her beautiful style, of which I have heard not better, but she can raise from the tomb those of whom she speaks or writes and make them live forever." But it was as the friend and inspirer of Michaelangelo that she is best known to us to-day. "Without wings," he writes to her, "I fly with your wings; by your genius I am raised to the skies; in your soul my thought is born." [Pg 62]

Among those who specially distinguished themselves for their profound scholarship, as exhibited in the halls of universities, were Dorotea Bucca, who occupied a chair of medicine in the University of Bologna, where, by reason of her rare eloquence and learning, she had students from all parts of Europe; Laura Ceretta, of Brescia, who, during seven years, gave public lectures on philosophy; Battista Malatesta, of Urbino, who taught philosophy with such marked success that the most distinguished professors of the day were forced to recognize themselves as her inferiors; and Fulvia Olympia Morati, who "at the age of fourteen wrote Latin letters and dialogues in Greek and Latin in the style of Plato and Cicero," and who, when she was scarcely sixteen, "was invited to give lectures in the University of Ferrara on the philosophical problems of the *Paradoxes of Cicero*." So great, indeed, was her knowledge of the ancient languages that she was offered the professorship of Greek in the University of Heidelberg; but death cut short her brilliant career before she could enter upon her duties in this famed institution of learning. It was female professors of this type—masters of Greek and Latin letters, who in the words of a recent writer, "sent forth from Italy such students as Moritz von Spiegelberg and Rudolph Agricola, to reform the instruction of Deventer and Zwoll and prepare the way for Erasmus and Reuchlin."

In the preceding list of learned women—and but a few only have been named of the many who in every city of importance conferred undying glory on their sex—it is clear that the Renaissance in Italy was, indeed, the golden age of women. Never in history had they greater freedom of action in things of the mind; never were they, except probably in the case of the English and German abbesses of the Middle Ages, treated with more marked deference and consideration or fairness; never were their efforts more highly appreciated or more generously rewarded, and never was their success more highly and enthusiastically applauded. Temporal and spiritual rulers, princes and cardinals, Popes and emperors vied with one another in paying just tribute to woman's genius as well as to woman's virtue. The nun in the cloister as well as the lady in the palace shared in the general enthusiasm for learning, and they enjoyed throughout the peninsula the same opportunities as men and received the same recognition for their work. Everywhere the intellectual arena was open to them on the same terms as to men. Incapacity and not sex was the only bar to entrance. [Pg 63]

But the men of those days, especially scholars of the type of Bembo, Politian and Ariosto, were liberal and broad-minded men, who never for a moment imagined that a woman was out of her sphere or unsexed because she wore a doctor's cap or occupied a university chair. And far from stigmatizing her as a singular or strong-minded woman, they recognized her as one who had but enhanced the graces and virtues of her sex by the added attractions of a cultivated mind and a developed intellect. Not only did she escape the shafts of satire and

ridicule, which are so frequently aimed at the educated woman of to-day, but she was called into the councils of temporal and spiritual rulers as well.

Woe betide the ill-advised misogynist who should venture to declaim against the inferiority of the female sex, or to protest against the honors which an appreciative and a chivalrous age bestowed upon it with so lavish a hand. The women of Italy, unlike those of other nations, knew how to defend themselves, and were not afraid to take, when occasion [Pg 64] demanded, the pen in self-defense. This is evidenced by numerous works which were written in response to certain narrow-minded pamphleteers—*miseri pedanti*, pitiful pedants, —who would have the activities of women limited to the nursery or the kitchen.[61]

A striking characteristic of these learned women was the entire absence of all priggism or pedantry. Whether lecturing on law or philosophy, or discoursing in Latin before Popes and cardinals, or taking part in discussions on art and literature with the eminent humanists of the day, they ever retained that beautiful simplicity which gives such a charm to true greatness of mind and is the best index of true scholarship and noble, symmetrical womanhood.

Nor did the rare intellectual attainments of these daughters of Italy destroy that harmony of creation which, some will have it, is sure to be jeopardized by giving women the same educational advantages as men. So far was this from being the case that there were never more loyal and helpful wives nor more devoted and stimulating mothers than there were among those women who wrote verses in the language of Sappho, or delivered public addresses in the tongue of Cicero. Still less did their serious and long-protracted studies entail any of the dangers we hear so much of nowadays. The large and healthy families of many of them prove that intellectual work, even of the highest order, is not incompatible with motherhood; and still less that it, *per se*, conduces, as is so often asserted, to race-suicide. These facts are commended to the consideration of our modern opponents of the [Pg 65] higher education of women and to those militant conservatives and old-time reactionaries who are still averse to opening the doors of some of our older universities to women—even such universities as Oxford, several of whose colleges were founded on the revenues derived from suppressed educational institutions which had been built and used for generations for the sole behoof of women.

But distinguished as were the women of Italy for their culture and scholarship, they were yet more distinguished as patrons of learning, as leaders and inspirers of the eminent men who were the chief representatives of the Renaissance. Reference has already been made to the influence of Vittoria Colonna on Michaelangelo—"who saw with her eyes, acted by her inspiration, was lifted by her beyond the stars"—but this is only one of many similar instances that might be adduced. Indeed, to the student of the Italian Renaissance, the most interesting feature of it was, not its women doctors and professors, but those noble and accomplished ladies who made the courts of Ferrara, Mantua, Milan and Urbino the most noted intellectual centers of Europe.

The most beautiful ornaments of the first three courts were Renée, duchess of Ferrara; Isabella d'Este, marchioness of Mantua, and Beatrice d'Este, duchess of Milan. They were all women of exceptional learning and culture, and each was the center of a galaxy of talent such as is rarely witnessed in any one place.

Among the men attracted to their courts were the most illustrious scholars, artists, poets and musicians of the Renaissance. Here they found congenial homes and breathed an atmosphere made fragrant by the appreciation shown by their charming hostesses for their power and genius. Here they found inspiration and a stimulus that spurred them on to their greatest achievements. In Ferrara, where it was said that "there were as many poets as there [Pg 66] were frogs in the country round about," were gathered the most gifted poets of the Renaissance who had been attracted there to recite their latest masterpieces. Among them

were Clement Marot, the first poet of modern France, and Ariosto, the immortal author of *Orlando Furioso*. There were the great painters, Titian and Bellini, and the illustrious poet, Torquato Tasso, whose love subsequently immortalized Renée's youngest daughter Leonora.

A similar artistic and intellectual supremacy was held by Isabelle d'Este. For portrait painters she had Titian and Leonardo da Vinci, while, as decorators of her home, she had Bellini and Perugino, whose compositions she herself arranged, even in the minutest details. So it was likewise in the gay and brilliant court of Beatrice d'Este, in Milan,—a place where artists and scholars of all nationalities were always sure of a cordial welcome.

But the ideal center of intellectual culture was the court of Urbino, the central figure of which was the learned and accomplished Elizabetta Gonzaga. This picturesque city of the eastern slope of the Apennines was then to Italy what Athens had been to Greece in the days of Pericles; and Elizabetta was to its court what Aspasia was in her own matchless salon—the magnet which attracted all the artists and men of letters of the age.

Castiglione, whose great work, *The Courtier*, was partly written as a memorial of the peerless woman who inspired it, gives us a vivid picture of "the fair ladies, with their quick intelligence and ready sympathy," discussing questions of art, literature, philosophy and Platonism, with the most eminent scholars and artists of Europe. But Castiglione confesses that he is unable to give us more than the mere outline of the picture. "To paint the polished society of Urbino," as has been well said, "we should need colors no palette contains—transparencies of the Grecian sky, the indigo of certain seas, the liquid azure of certain eyes. [Pg 67] For more than a century the court of Urbino was regarded as the supreme exemplar. In the seventeenth century, the Hotel de Rambouillet was still striving to make itself a copy of it; unluckily such things as these are not easily copied."[62]

We are not surprised, then, at being told that "men moulded by Italian ladies"—such ladies as graced the court of Urbino—"could be distinguished among a thousand." Still less are we surprised to note the immense difference between the refined and brilliant discussions of *The Courtier* as compared with the coarse tales of the *Decameron* and *Heptameron*. And we can understand the marvelous influence which Castiglione's matchless work—inspired by the beloved Duchess Elizabetta—had upon the masters of English literature—on Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Spenser, Marlow, Shelley.

Cardinal Bembo, who was one of the most assiduous frequenters of this famous court, in writing of Elizabetta, does not hesitate to declare: "I have seen many excellent and noble women, and have heard of some who were as illustrious for certain qualities, but in her alone among women, all virtues were united and brought together. I have never seen nor heard of any one who was her equal, and know very few who have even come near her."

It was Castiglione's experience at the court of Urbino, where he was a daily witness of the irresistible influence of Elizabetta, that made him give expression to the sentiment, "Man has for his portion physical strength and external activities; all doing must be his, all inspiration must come from woman." It was also this keen student of the mysterious workings of woman's genius and of her secret, all-pervading influence, at times and in places least suspected, who penned the notable statement—worthy of the Renaissance —"Without women nothing is possible, either in military courage, or art, or poetry, or [Pg 68] music, or philosophy, or even religion. God is truly seen only through them."

Only a few words are necessary to tell of the learned women of the Renaissance outside of Italy. On account of its intimate connection with the Italian peninsula, Spain was the second country in Europe to experience the effects of the new intellectual movement. Among the educated Italians whom Isabella, the Catholic, had attracted to her court were the brothers Geraldini, whom she appointed as teachers of her children. Of her daughter, Juana, Juan Vivès, the eminent Spanish scholar, says she was able to make impromptu speeches in

Latin, while Catherine, who became the wife of Henry VIII, excited the admiration of Erasmus by the extent and accuracy of her knowledge. It was from Salamanca that Isabella summoned her own teacher of Latin, the learned Beatrix Galindo,[63] who was a professor of rhetoric in the university long before Elizabeth of England had studied the language of Virgil under Ascham.

Then there was Francisca de Lebrixa who often filled the chair of her father, who was professor of history and rhetoric in the University of Alcala, and Isabella Losa, of Cordova, who, among her other acquirements, counted a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. To his learned daughters, Gregoria and Luisa, Antonio Perez, minister of Philip II, wrote saying: "Do not imagine, when you are writing to me, that you are addressing Cicero or some Greek author; lower your style to my level." There were also Isabella de Joya, who commented on Scotus Erigena; Catherine Ribera, the bard of love and faith; Doña Maria Pacheco de Mendoza; Bernarda Ferreyra, to whom, on account of her rare scholarship, Lopez de Vega dedicated his beautiful elegy *Phillis*; Juana Morella, who, besides having a profound [Pg 69] knowledge of music, philosophy, divinity and jurisprudence, was the mistress of fourteen languages; Juana de la Cruz, the famous Mexican nun whose poetry of superior merit, as well as her exceptional attainments in many branches of knowledge, won for her the epithet of the "Tenth Muse"; Luisa Sigea, who besides being a poet was a mistress of the classical and several oriental languages, including Hebrew and Syro-Chaldaic, and other learned women whom "no one was astonished to see taking by main force the first rank in the spheres of literature, philosophy and theology."

So profoundly had the Renaissance affected the women of a limited circle in England, that Erasmus could declare without exaggeration: "It is charming to see the female sex demand classical instruction. The queen is remarkably learned and her daughter writes good Latin. The home of More is truly the abode of the Muses."

The queen of whom Erasmus speaks is Catherine of Aragon, who was educated in Spain, who was a pupil of Vivès, and who, besides having a thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek, was well acquainted with several modern languages. The daughters of Sir Thomas More were among the most learned women of their time and were, indeed, worthy of dwelling in "the home of the Muses."

Lady Jane Grey read Plato in the original at the age of thirteen.[64] Anne, Margaret and Jane Seymour were likewise celebrated for their knowledge of the classics, as were Anne Boleyn and Mary Stuart, who both received their education in France, and especially Queen Elizabeth, who was not only one of the most learned women of her time but was probably [Pg 70] also the most learned queen England has ever produced. There were, however, no university professors or poets of eminence among the English women, as there were in Italy and Spain, and their creative work was practically nothing.

Since the time of Hroswitha, Gertrude, the Matildas and Hildegard, the learned woman has never been the ideal woman in Germany. When Olympia Morati was on her way from Ferrara to Heidelberg to take the chair of Greek, she found the daughters of professors and humanists devoting themselves to sewing and embroidery instead of art and literature. Anna, the eldest daughter of Melanchthon, was almost alone among the German women of the Renaissance who had a knowledge of Latin.

In France the most learned woman of her time was undoubtedly Margaret of Angoulême, queen of Navarre. So great was her knowledge and so enthusiastic was she in promoting the study of the Latin and Greek classics that Michelet, with something of exaggeration, perhaps, calls her "the amiable mother of the Renaissance in France."[65] She was noted for her devotion to the study of Scripture and theology as well as Greek and Hebrew. She always had around her, or was in correspondence with, the most distinguished scholars,

poets, artists, philosophers and theologians of the age, and undoubtedly did much, as a patroness of men of letters, toward furthering the literary movement in France. She is, however, chiefly known to modern readers by her *Heptameron*—a work which reveals too clearly the tastes of her associates and the manners and customs of the time.

With the exception of Margaret of Navarre, there were but few literary women of more than ephemeral reputation during the French Renaissance. Among these Louise Labé deserves mention, as she was the most distinguished poetess in France during the sixteenth century. [66] She, like Margaret, was the center of a coterie of men of letters; but the reunions over which she presided, as well as those of the author of the *Heptameron*, were entirely lacking in the dignity and refinement of those of the polished court of Urbino in the days of the peerless Elizabetta Gonzaga. [Pg 71]

From what has been said respecting the rare learning of the women of the Renaissance, one might infer that women in general enjoyed special educational facilities during this period of intellectual activity. Paradoxical as it may seem, the very contrary was the case. For, as history tells us, the education of the Renaissance was essentially aristocratic. It was only for the women of the nobility and for the wives and daughters of scholars, while the great majority of the sex remained in a state of complete illiteracy.

The environment of the daughters of scholars was peculiarly favorable to their intellectual development, and learning was in a certain measure their natural heritage. They did not receive their education in schools, for there were then few or no schools for girls, but from their fathers or from the men of letters who frequented their homes. A typical home of this kind was that of the noted savant, Robert Estienne of Paris, printer to Francis I. Here the language of conversation was Latin, not only for the members of the family but also for the servants as well.[67] Under such conditions we are not surprised to be informed that the girls, as well as the boys, learned to speak Latin as well as their mother tongue. And listening, as they did, to the daily discussions on art and literature by the most learned men of a most learned age, it was inevitable that they should acquire those vast stores of knowledge on all subjects that so excite the astonishment of our less studious women of to-day. [Pg 72]

With the daughters of the nobility it was the same. In their youth they had, under the paternal roof, the benefit of the instruction of the most eminent masters of the time. And as they grew up their constant intercourse with learned men and the part they took in all literary and social assemblies, which were so prominent a feature of the period, enabled them to complete their education under the most favorable auspices, and to have, before they were out of their teens, a fund of information on all subjects that could not be obtained so well, even in the best of our modern institutions of learning.

It was to these daughters of the élite—*ingenuæ puellæ*—that Erasmus and Vivès addressed their treatises on education. They were the privileged class at whose disposition were placed all the treasures of Greek and Latin letters. It was, then, an easy matter for them to write poetry and dissertations in the languages of Horace and Plato. And it was often a necessity for them to speak Latin, for it was then the universal language of the learned—the language that was understood everywhere—in England as in Italy, in Germany as in France, in Flanders as well as in Spain and Portugal.

It was then that The Republic of Letters was a reality as never before; that the man of letters was, of a truth, "a citizen of the world"; that his country was wherever the cult of letters had priests or devotees. He was what the ballad singer was during the Middle Ages, but with more dignity and seriousness. He was the agent and representative of intellectual life, the living symbol of the unity and solidarity of the human mind. And as in time he linked the past to the present so likewise in space he bound all peoples together and belonged equally to all. Such was Erasmus of Holland, who was equally at home in France and Switzerland, [Pg 73]

in Italy and England—everywhere received with the honor accorded to princes of the blood royal. Such was Vivès, of Spain, the teacher of Catherine of Aragon, of Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII—at one time professor in Louvain, at another in Oxford—always and everywhere an ardent exponent of humanism for women as well as for men. Such was Politian and such were scores of his contemporaries, who carried the torch of knowledge from castle to castle and from court to court, where maidens equally with youths enjoyed all the advantages derivable from the lessons of such distinguished teachers and such eminent leaders of culture.

For it was a peculiarity of the scholar of the Renaissance that he was a great traveler—seeking knowledge wherever it was to be found—and carrying it with him whithersoever he went. He journeyed from university to university, everywhere exchanging views with his intellectual compeers, and everywhere diffusing the knowledge he had so laboriously acquired. The consequence was a wonderful uniformity of education among the higher classes—among women as well as among men—something that was never known before. Through the generally diffused knowledge of Latin, the common literary medium of communication, all the nations of Europe, even those at war with one another, were brought together in an intellectual brotherhood and in a way which gave scholarship a power and a prestige that accrued to the benefit of women and men alike.

But the educational advantages enjoyed by the women of the Renaissance were not for the bourgeoisie—not for the daughters of peasants, tradesmen and artisans. They were solely, as [Pg 74] has been stated, for the benefit of the children of princes or of scholars—of those only who could claim either nobility of birth or nobility of genius.[68] Even the most zealous of the humanists would have been surprised if they had been asked to diffuse a portion of their light among the women of the masses. For education, as they viewed it, was something solely for the elect—for ladies of the court and not for women of a lower condition. So far as the rest of womankind was concerned, their occupation was limited, according to a Breton saying, to looking after altar, hearth, and children—"*La femme se doit garder l'autel, le feu, les enfants*."

It was about this time, too, that men began, especially in France and Germany, to revive the anti-feminist crusade which had so retarded the literary movement among the women of ancient Greece and Rome. They refused to hear women and intellect spoken of together. The Germans recognized no intelligence in them apart from domestic duties, and seemed to belong to that strange race, that has not yet died out, which believes woman to be "afflicted with the radical incapacity to acquire an individual idea." "What the Italians called intelligence a German would call tittle-tattle, trickery, the spirit of opposition. They rejected such gratifications and had no intention of allowing Delilah to shear them."[69]

In the estimation of Luther, the intellectual aspirations of women were not only an [Pg 75] absurdity, but were also a positive peril. "Take them," he says, "from their housewifery and they are good for nothing." He treated the humanist Vivès, preceptor of Mary Tudor, as "a dangerous spirit," because the learned Spaniard was an ardent advocate of the higher education of women. As to abstract and severe studies they were for girls, according to one of Luther's contemporaries, but "vain and futile quackeries." For an accomplished woman to quote the Fathers or the ancient classical writers was to provoke ridicule, because to do so was considered an indication of pedantry or affectation. Montaigne gave expression to the age-old prejudice against woman by refusing to regard her as anything but a pretty animal, while Rabelais, the coryphæus of the French Renaissance, declared that "Nature in creating woman lost the good sense which she had displayed in the creation of all other things."

Such being the views of the great leaders of thought and formers of public opinion respecting the mental inferiority of woman—views which, outside of Italy, had, with few exceptions, the cordial approval of the supercilious, cockahoop male—is it necessary to add

that the Renaissance did nothing for popular education? The masses of women, especially after the suppression of the convent schools in England and Germany, were, in many parts of Europe, and notably in the two countries mentioned, in a worse condition than they were during the Dark Ages.[70]

[Pg 76]

WOMAN AND EDUCATION BETWEEN THE RENAISSANCE AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The period following the Renaissance was not a brilliant one for woman, especially outside of Italy. For in this favored land, even after the decadence in literature that followed the glorious cinquecento, intellectual life opposed so effective a barrier to the forces of extinction which were at work in other parts of Europe, notably Germany and England, that there were still in every part of the peninsula from the fertile plains of Lombardy to the sunny Ionian sea, learned and cultured women who were eager to emulate the achievements of their illustrious sisters of Italy's golden age of art, and letters. We do not, it is true, find among them a Properzia de Rossi, a Veronica Gambara, or a Vittoria Colonna; but we find many earnest and enthusiastic students in every department of knowledge.

That which most impresses the student of education during this period of Italian history is not the splendor of art and letters in court and castle, which so dazzled Europe during the time of Renée of Ferrara and Elizabetta Gonzaga of Urbino. We find, it is true, a goodly number of women who won distinction as poets and artists; but it is rather those who were devoted to more serious studies that arrest our attention—women who attained eminence in physical and natural science, in mathematics, in the classical and oriental languages, in philosophy, law and theology. Space precludes the mention of more than a few of these, but these few may be accepted as typical of many others almost equally distinguished.

Chief among those of whom their countrymen are specially proud are Rosanna Somaglia Landi, of Milan, linguist and translator of Anacreon; Maria Selvaggia Borghini, of Pisa, translator of the works of Tertullian; Eleonora Barbapiccola, of Salerno, who translated into Italian the *Principa Philosophiæ* of Descartes; Maria Angela Arginghelli, of Naples, who [Pg 77] was famed for her profound knowledge of physics and the higher mathematics and who gave an Italian version of Stephen Hales' *Vegetable Statics*. Then there was Clelia Grillo Borromeo, of Genoa, who was so distinguished in science, mathematics, mechanics and languages that a medal was struck in her honor bearing the inscription, *Gloria Genuensium* —glory of the Genoese; and the still more famous Elena Cornaro Piscopia, of Venice, who was truly a prodigy of learning as well as a paragon of virtue. In addition to a knowledge of many modern, classical and oriental tongues, she exhibited remarkable proficiency in astronomy, mathematics, music, philosophy and theology. After a course of study in the University of Padua and after the usual examination and discourse in classic Latin on some of the questions of Aristotelian philosophy, she had the doctorate of philosophy conferred on her in the cathedral of Padua, in the presence of thousands of learned men and applauding students from all parts of Europe. But not content with conferring on this extraordinary woman the ring, wreath of laurel and the ermine mozetta—the usual insignia of the doctorate—the University, as a special mark of distinction, had a medal coined in honor of the illustrious graduate bearing her effigy, with the words, as the decree of the University expressed it, *ad perpetuam rei memoriam*. That there was nothing superficial about this young woman's knowledge of languages, it suffices to state that she was able to speak Latin and Greek as fluently as her own Italian, and that so profound was her knowledge of divinity that there were many distinguished ecclesiastics in both Italy and France who favored conferring on her the doctorate in theology.

Among other young women who obtained the doctorate in various universities were Maddalena Canedi-Noe and Maria Vittoria Dosi who, after the usual course of study in the

university of Bologna, obtained the degree of doctor of civil law, and Maria Pellegrina Amoretti, who received the degree of doctor in both canon and civil law in the University of [Pg 78] Pavia and with it the doctor's cap—*berreto dottorale*. But more remarkable for learning than any of these university graduates was Maria Gaetana Agnesi, one of the most extraordinary women scholars of all time. On account of her wonderful knowledge of languages she was called "The Oracle of Seven Tongues." This, however, is not her chief title to fame. It is rather her marvelous achievements in the domain of the higher mathematics. After the appearance of her most noted work, *Instituzioni Analytiche*, she would at once have been elected a member of the French Academy of Sciences had not the laws of this learned body precluded the admission of women.[71] That great Mæcenas of learning, Benedict XIV, showed his appreciation of Maria Gaetana's exceptional attainments by appointing her—*motu proprio*—to the chair of higher mathematics in the University of Bologna. A similar honor had, in the preceding century, been conferred on Marta Marchina, of Naples, when, on account of her rare knowledge of letters, philosophy and theology, she was offered a chair in the Sapienza, in Rome, an honor which her modesty and love of retirement caused her to decline.

We have seen that women professors achieved distinction in the Italian universities even as early as the closing centuries of the Middle Ages. The same was true during the Renaissance, and it has been equally true during the period that has elapsed since the cinquecento.

Among the most eminent of those who taught in the universities were Laura Bassi, who had the chair of physics in the University of Bologna, and Clotilde Tambroni, professor of the Greek language and literature in the same institution of learning. So thorough was her knowledge of the language of Plato that it was the opinion of her contemporaries that there were then only three persons in Europe who equaled her in her mastery of this classic [Pg 79] tongue. It was this distinguished Hellenist who graciously delivered the address when one of her countrywomen, Maria dalle Donne, received her doctorate in medicine and surgery. After her graduation Dr. dalle Donne was given charge of a school for midwives in which she rendered the greatest service to her sex. Even the chair of anatomy in the University of Bologna was held by a woman, Anna Morandi-Menzolini, and her work was of the highest order. The same position was held by another woman, Maria Petraccini-Terretti, in the University of Ferrara.

What a contrast between the attitude of the universities of Italy and those of other parts of the world toward women as students and professors! For a thousand years the doors of the Italian universities have been open to women, as well as to men; and for a thousand years women, as well as men, have received their degrees from these noble and liberal institutions, and occupied the most important positions in their gift, and that, too, with the approval and encouragement of both spiritual and temporal rulers. For these wise and broad-minded men did not regard it unwomanly for Laura Bassi to teach physics, for Clotilde Tambroni to teach Greek, for Dorotea Bucca to teach medicine, for Maria Gaetana to teach differential and integral calculus, for Anna Morandi to teach anatomy, for Novella d'Andrea to teach canon law, or even, if we may believe Denifle, one of the best of authorities, for the daughters of a Paris professor to teach theology.[72] Yes, what a contrast, indeed, between the Universities of Bologna and Padua, with their long and honored list of women graduates and professors, and the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford from [Pg 80] which women have always been and are still excluded, both as students and professors.

Contrast, also, the honors shown to women as students and professors of medicine in Salerno, in the thirteenth century, with the riots excited among the chivalrous male students of the University of Edinburgh, when, less than a half century ago, seven young women applied for the privilege of attending the courses of lectures on medicine and surgery in that institution. And contrast the sympathy and encouragement of Italy with the almost brutal

opposition which women in our own country encountered when, but a few decades ago, they applied for admittance to the medical schools of New York and Philadelphia. The difference between the Italian and the Anglo-Saxon attitude toward women in the all-important matters in question requires no comment.[73]

One reason for the great difference between the women of Italy and those of other parts of Europe in the matter of higher education during the period we have been considering was the old Roman spirit of independence of the former and their always insisting on what they regarded as their natural and indefeasible rights. Following the example of the matrons of ancient Rome, they insisted on being treated as the equals of men, and, as a consequence, they demanded in the intellectual order all the advantages that were accorded to men. They would never admit their mental inferiority to man, and woe betide the luckless wight who even insinuated such inferiority. The shafts of satire and ridicule were at once directed against him by a score of women who were able to use the pen as well as, if not better than, himself. Sometimes, however, such an one was taken seriously, and then the result was a book by some clever woman to prove that there was no difference in the intellectual power [Pg 81] of the two sexes—that, if there was a difference, it was in favor of the gentler sex. There is quite a large number of such works in Italian; and it must be said that the women always met the arguments of their adversaries in a manner that does them the greatest credit.

It was probably because of their insistence on the equality of the sexes, as well as because of their achievements in every department of mental activity, that the educated women of Italy enjoyed so many privileges denied their sisters in other parts of Europe. Thus, in addition to being treated as the equals of men in the universities, they met them on an equal footing in the art, literary and scientific societies and academies, in the proceedings of which they always exhibited an active and enthusiastic interest. In these reunions the women gained strength of mind and independence of character from the men, while the men imbibed refinement and gentleness from the women. Compare this condition with the systematic exclusion of women from similar societies in other countries—even in this twentieth century of ours—and one of the not least potent reasons for the intellectual supremacy of the women of Italy will be apparent.

Next after Italy, France was the country in which, during the post-Renaissance period, women enjoyed the greatest advantages of mental development. But we look in vain, even during the age of Louis XIV, for that flowering of the female intellect that, at the same period, rendered the daughters of Italy so famous. It is true that there was a certain number of learned women in France during the seventeenth century, and notably during the golden age of Louis XIV, for during this period the traditions of the Renaissance were perpetuated and there was still a lingering love of letters, at least among certain classes of the aristocracy.

Prominent among those who attracted attention for their learning were Gilberte and [Pg 82] Jaqueline Pascal, of the celebrated convent of Port Royal; Marie-Eleanore de Rohan and Gabrielle de Rochechouart, both, like the Pascal sisters, inmates of the cloister; Marie Cramoisy, wife of the first director of the royal printing office, and Mlle. de Luynes, a friend of Pascal. All these counted among their attainments a writing knowledge of Latin, but were far from being able, like the Italian women above mentioned, to speak it with the same fluency as they did their mother tongue.

In addition to the learned French women just named, there was Elisabeth de Rochechouart, a niece of Mme. de Montespan, who was able to read Plato in Greek, and Anne de Rohan, Princess of Guéméné, who surprised her countrymen by studying Hebrew. Then there were Mme. de Grignan, Marie Dupré, Louise Serment, Anne de La Vigne, who, like the Princess Palatine, Elisabeth, and Christine of Sweden, were ardent disciples of Descartes, and took the lead among the *femmes philosophes* of their time.

But for profound and varied scholarship Mme. Dacier, the daughter of the erudite Tanquil Le Fevre, was the most famous of all the women of her time in France. Possessed of rare power of eloquence and beauty of style, together with an extraordinary capacity for criticism, there was not a man in Europe who did not respect her judgment in matters of literature and culture. But that for which she was specially celebrated was her exceptional knowledge of Latin and Greek. She not only translated the Iliad and the Odyssey but also several other of the ancient classics. None of her contemporaries had a more thorough mastery of the tongues of Homer and Virgil, nor did any of her countrymen contribute more than she toward the advancement of the knowledge of the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. So highly prized was her version of the Iliad that it was translated by Ozell into English. Her version of Plato's Phædo was also translated into English and published by a New York bookseller more than a century after her death. The scholarly Menagius, in his *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum*, did not hesitate to pronounce her the most learned woman of all time—*Feminarum quot sunt, quot fuere doctissima*.[74] [Pg 83]

To Mme. de Maintenon, the morganatic wife of the Great Monarch, is due the Institut de Saint-Cyr, the first state school for girls founded in France. It was, however, solely for the daughters of the nobility. And, although it was from the first under the direction of the foundress, a woman who was before all else a teacher as well as one of the most enlightened women of the most literary and philosophic age France ever knew—the age when the French language was perfected, the age of the Academy, of Boileau, Molière, Racine, Bossuet, Descartes—the studies prescribed in this institution, which was under the special patronage of the king, were of the most elementary character. They comprised reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, music, drawing, dancing, and the elements of history, mythology and geography. As to history, Mme. de Maintenon was satisfied if the pupils of Saint-Cyr knew enough not to confound the kings of France with those of other nations, and were able to avoid mistaking a Roman emperor for the Emperor of China or Japan; or the King of Spain or England for the King of Persia or Siam. And yet, restricted as it was, her programme of studies was more complete than that of any other girls' school in the kingdom. One of her reasons for not insisting on a more thorough course was that "women never know but by halves, and the little that they do know usually makes them proud, haughty and talkative and disgusted with solid things."[75]

In Saint-Cyr, the best girls' school in the kingdom, there was not a word about the first principles of philosophy, nor about the physical and natural sciences recommended by Fénelon. The elements just referred to, combined with a goodly amount of esprit—*bien de l'esprit*—were considered quite sufficient to prepare the future wives of the nobility for all the duties they would be called upon to perform. [Pg 84]

Mme. de Maintenon had probably been unconsciously influenced by what she had seen at the court of her liege lord, where the greater part of the women were extremely ignorant. Even Mme. de Montespan, the king's favorite, and for years the leading figure at the court, was no exception. So ignorant was she that she was not even able to spell the simplest and most common words.[76]

And so it was with the most illustrious ladies of France. Many of them were so devoid of instruction that they were unable either to read or to write. Even the teachers in Saint-Cyr were so deficient in the simplest rudiments of an education that Mme. de Maintenon found it necessary to correct their letters, in order to teach them the most essential rules of epistolary correspondence. In reality, the women of the age of Louis XIV did not trouble themselves about an education as we understand it. Endowed with esprit, with a natural and acquired taste for things intellectual, they were satisfied with such knowledge as they could glean from reading or conversation, and with comparatively few exceptions, showed no disposition to devote long years to study in school, much less in a university, as did their sisters to the south of the Alps. [Pg 85]

The foundress of Saint-Cyr had likewise been influenced by her environment as well as by the court—an environment which was becoming daily more and more unfavorable to the education, especially anything approaching the higher education, of women. A young woman's education was considered complete when she was able to read, write, dance and play some musical instrument. Anything more was deemed superfluous and deserving of censure and ridicule rather than praise.

It was at this time that Molière's two celebrated plays, *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, were given to the world. These well-known productions, replete with the author's brightest flashes of wit, and abounding in his most effective shafts of satire, produced at once an immense sensation. As soon as published, they were in the hands of everybody. Those who were opposed to the education of women—and the number was daily increasing—had recourse to them as to arsenals which supplied them with just the arms they had so long needed to decide in their favor the long warfare which they had been conducting against the gentler sex. The views of the bourgeois Chrysale as expressed to his sister, Belise, were so in harmony with their own that they loved on every occasion to repeat with him: [Pg 86]

"No,
It isn't decent, and for many reasons,
That womankind should study and know too much.
To teach her children what is right and wrong,
Manage her household, oversee her servants,
And keep expenses within bounds, should be
Her only study and philosophy.
Our fathers, on this point, showed great good sense;
They said a woman always knows enough
If but her understanding reaches
To telling, one from t'other, coat and breeches.
Their wives, who couldn't read, led honest lives,
Their households were their only learned theme,
And all their books were thimble, thread and needles.
With which they made their daughters' wedding outfits.
But now our women scorn to live like that;
They want to write and all be authoresses.
They think no knowledge is too deep for them."[77]

Molière's intention in writing these justly famous comedies was not, as is so often asserted, to ridicule women of learning, but only those superficial pedants who affected knowledge or loved to make a display of the little knowledge they happened to possess. The result, however, was quite different from what had been intended, for the poet's pleasantries were taken so seriously, that even women of real learning, in order to avoid ridicule, were condemned to absolute silence. The comic dramatist, Destouches, expressed the prevailing opinion when he wrote: [Pg 87]

"Une femme savante
Doit cacher son savoir, ou c'est une imprudente."[78]

Few French women thereafter had the courage to defend their sex, as did their sisters in Italy, and the result was that, with a few exceptions, like Mme. du Châtelet, Sophie Germain, and Mme. Lepaute, there were no more learned women in France for fully two centuries.

Never did satire and ridicule accomplish more, except probably in the case of *Don Quixote* —that masterly creation of Cervantes which dealt the death-blow to knight-errantry—than

did *Les Femmes Savantes* and *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. The learned woman became as much an object of derision in France as was the knight-errant in Spain.

It was not, however, in the nature of the French woman, with all her vivacity and energy, to be suppressed entirely or to be relegated for long to the background in things of the mind. But, not then daring to face the ridicule which was inevitable, if she devoted herself to science or philosophy, she sought a substitute for her intellectual activity in the salon. [Pg 88]

The first salon was established by an Italian woman, the Marquise de Rambouillet, in 1617, and was modeled after the famous reunions held at the court of Urbino under Elizabetta Gonzaga, a century before. Although it never exhibited the splendor of its Italian prototype, the Hôtel de Rambouillet was for more than fifty years the most important literary center of the kind in France. Here, owing to the tact, esprit, and magnetic personality of Mme. de Rambouillet, were gathered the most distinguished men and women of the time. Among them were poets, philosophers, statesmen, ecclesiastics and ladies of rank, whose names still dazzle us by their brilliancy. Bossuet, Molière, La Fontaine, Corneille and the great Condé were there; so were Fléchier, Balzac, Voiture, Saint-Evremont, Descartes and La Rochefoucauld; and so, too, were Mme. de Sevigné, the Duchess of Montpensier, Madeleine de Scudéry, La Comtesse de La Fayette, Charlotte de Montmorency, and Cardinal Richelieu who got from this noted salon the idea which led to his greatest foundation—the French Academy.

It was Mme. de Rambouillet who, through her reunions in her exquisite *Chambre Bleue*, for the first time brought together elements that were previously considered as belonging to different castes. It was she, also, who created modern society with its purely intellectual hierarchy, by having the representatives of the nobility meet men of science and letters on an equal footing. It seems to us now the most natural thing in the world for a great savant, a great poet, or a great philosopher, to be received in the same salon with the Duchess of Montpensier—*La Grande Mademoiselle*—but it was far from being so when the brilliant young Italian matron—for she was a daughter of the noble Roman family of the Savelli—began her epoch-making work in the Hôtel de Rambouillet, where, after overcoming countless difficulties and prejudices, she eventually succeeded in bringing together, and in enlisting in a common cause, the nobility of birth and the nobility of intellect, and introducing into the exclusive set of Paris the same kind of social coteries that had so long been popular in Urbino and Ferrara. [Pg 89]

The Hôtel de Rambouillet was the exemplar of that long series of salons which, for two centuries, were the favorite trysting-places of the talent, the wit, the beauty of Europe, and which exerted such a potent influence on society and on the progress of science and literature. The mistress of the salon was supreme, and she maintained her supremacy by her tact, sympathy, intelligence and mental alertness, rather than by learning and superior mental power.

Indeed, it is a singular fact that very few of the *salonières* were learned women. The most gifted and the most learned of them were Mlle. Lespinasse, Mme. de Staël, and Mme. Swetchine. Mme. Geoffrin, who was of bourgeois origin, was so devoid of education that Voltaire said she was unable to write two lines correctly. And yet, despite her educational limitations, she became, by her own unaided efforts, the queen of intellectual Europe.

And, if we may judge by their portraits, most of the great leaders of salons were homely, if not positively ugly, and many of them were advanced in years. Thus, Mme. du Deffand—the female Voltaire—was sixty-eight years old and blind when her friendship with Horace Walpole, one of the wittiest Englishmen who ever lived, began—a friendship that endured until her death at the age of eighty-three. The face of Mlle. de Lespinasse was disfigured by small-pox and her eyesight was impaired; and yet, without rank, wealth or beauty, she was the pivot around which circled the talent and fashion of Paris, and whose personal

magnetism was so great that the state, the church, the court, as well as foreign countries, had their most distinguished representatives in her salon. [Pg 90]

Here she received and entertained her friends every evening from five until nine o'clock. "It was," writes La Harpe, "almost a title to consideration to be received into this society." So great was the influence exerted by Mlle. de Lespinasse that she bent savants to her will by the sheer force of genius. Her salon became known as "the ante-chamber of the French Academy"; for it was asserted that half the academicians of her time owed their fauteuils to her active canvass in their behalf. And so successful was she in opening the lips and minds of her habitués, whether an historian like Hume, a philosopher like Condillac, a statesman like Turgot, a mathematician like d'Alembert, a litterateur like Marmontel or an encyclopedist like Condorcet, that it was said of her that she made "marble feel and matter think."

She was a veritable enchantress of the great and the learned of her time. She did not, however, wield her magic wand through her learning, or the accident of birth, or the physical attractions of person, but solely by reason of her wonderful vivacity, charm of mind, and exquisite tact, which consisted, as those who knew her well tell us, "in the art of saying to each that which suits him," and in "making the best of the minds of others, of interesting them, and of bringing them into play without any appearance of constraint or effort." This rare faculty it was which secured for her a supremacy in the world of thought and action that has been accorded to but few women in the world's history. Vibrant with emotion and passion, she reminds one of the gifted but hapless Heloise. Marmontel, who had such a high opinion of her judgment that he submitted his works for her criticism, as Molière had submitted his to Ninon de Lenclos, describes her as "the keenest intelligence, the most ardent soul, the most inflammable imagination that has existed since Sappho." [Pg 91]

But aside from what she achieved indirectly through the habitués of her salon, what has this supremely clever woman left to the world? Only a few love letters to a heartless coxcomb.

And what have the other noted salonières from the time of the Marquise de Rambouillet to that of Mme. Swetchine—full two centuries—bequeathed to us that is worth preserving? With the exception of the works of Mme. de Staël, whom Lord Jeffrey declared to be "the greatest female writer in any age or country," we have little more than certain *Mémoires* and *Correspondances* whose chief claims to fame rest on the vivid pictures which they present of the manners and customs of the time and of the celebrities who were regarded as the chief ornaments of the salons which they severally frequented. Most of these works were posthumous; for few women, after Molière's merciless scoring of learned women, had the courage to appear in print. Even Mme. de Scudéry, one of the most gifted and prolific writers of the period, gave her first novel to the world under her brother's name. And so tabooed was female authorship that Mme. de La Fayette, one of the most brilliant of the *précieuses*, disclaimed all knowledge of her *Princesse de Clèves*, while her masterpiece, *Histoire d'Henriette d'Angleterre*, was not published until after her death.

The truth is that the period of the salon was for the most part a period of contrasts and contradictions. At first the better educated *salonières* were chiefly interested in belles-lettres. Then they devoted themselves more to science and philosophy, and finally, during the years immediately preceding the Revolution, they found their greatest pleasure in politics. As for the men, while professing to adore women, they had little esteem for them, and still less respect. Often, it is true, the women who frequented the salons were deserving neither of respect nor of esteem. [Pg 92]

Sydney Smith spoke of those under the old régime as "women of brilliant talents who violated all the common duties of life and gave very pleasant little suppers." It was certainly true of many of them—even of some of the most distinguished—such, for instance, as Mme. d'Epinay, Mme. du Deffand, Ninon de Lenclos and Mme. Tencin, the mother of

D'Alembert. There was little in their manner of life to distinguish them from the *hetæræ* of ancient Athens, and it was probably owing to this fact, as well as their wit and brilliancy, that many of them attained such preëminence as social leaders. The statesmen, philosophers, men of science and letters of France, like those of Greece more than two thousand years before, wanted distraction and amusement. That the mistresses of the salons should be women of learning was of little moment. The all important thing for their habitués was that they should be good entertainers—that they should be witty, tactful and sympathetic—and, if ignorant, that they should be brilliantly ignorant, and, at the same time, enchantingly frank and naïve.

Strange as it may appear there was as much hostility to learned women at the close of the eighteenth century as there was in the time of Louis XIV. And the remarkable fact is that the strongest opponents of women's education were found among the most prominent writers and scholars of the day—men who, like their predecessors of old, based their opposition on the assumed mental inferiority of woman. Thus, to Rousseau, woman was at best but "an imperfect man," and, in many respects, little more than "a grown-up child." Search after abstract and speculative truths, principles and axioms in science, "everything that tends to generalize ideas is outside of her competence." That means that women are to be excluded from the study of mathematics and the physical sciences, because they are incapable of generalization, abstraction, and the mental concentration that these subjects demand. Even [Pg 93] the masterpieces of literature, according to him, are beyond their comprehension. In a word, feminine studies, Rousseau will have it, should relate exclusively to practical and domestic matters and he endorses the words of Molière that

> "It is not seemly, and for many reasons,
> That a woman should study and know so many things."

Diderot, Montesquieu, Voltaire and the Encyclopedists share the views of Rousseau. Diderot declares that serious studies do not comport with woman's sex, while Montesquieu would limit female education to mere accomplishments.

But this is not all. Antagonistic as these men were to the education of the daughters of the nobility and the well-to-do, they were entirely opposed to the education of the children of the poor. "The good of society," it was averred, "demands that the instruction of the people extend not beyond their occupations." "The poor," declares Rousseau, "have no need of instruction," and Voltaire and the Encyclopedists say, "Amen."[79]

Very little need be said about the education of women in Germany during the period we have been considering. When there was any at all, it was of the most rudimentary character, while as to books, they were limited to the kind recommended by Byron for the women of modern Greece—"books of piety and cookery." The attitude of the Germans generally [Pg 94] toward female education, for centuries past, was clearly defined by the Kaiser Wilhelm II, when, a few years ago, he publicly stated: "I agree with my wife. She says women have no business to interfere with anything outside of the four K's, that is, *Kinder*, *Kirche*, *Küche*, *Kleider*—children, church, kitchen, clothes."

There was, however, during the period we are now considering, one remarkable example of a learned woman of Teutonic origin. This was the famous Anna Maria van Schurman, who was one of the most gifted women that ever lived. She was, probably, as near to being a universal genius as any one of her sex of whom we have knowledge. Artist, musician, poet, philosopher, theologian, linguist, she was the admiration of the scholars of the world and the pride of the Low Countries—the land of her birth. She lived when Holland was in the van of human progress and amidst of the splendors of the Dutch Renaissance. She was the friend and correspondent of the most distinguished scholars and most noted celebrities of her time. Among these were Voet, Spanheim, Descartes, Gassendi, Constantine Huyghens, Princess

Elizabeth of Bohemia, Queen Christina of Sweden, and Cardinal Richelieu. To go to the Netherlands, it was then said, without seeing Anna van Schurman, was like going to Paris without seeing the king. She was hailed as "The Tenth Muse," "The Sappho of Holland," "The Oracle of Art," "The Star of Utrecht."

That, however, which gave the greatest renown to the "Learned Maid," as Anna was called, was her extraordinary knowledge of languages. For, besides being proficient in the chief modern tongues of Europe, she was well acquainted with Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Syro-Chaldaic and Ethiopic. The oriental languages she studied as an aid to the better understanding of Holy Scripture.

She was the author of several works, among which was an Ethiopic grammar which was acclaimed by the professors of the Dutch universities as a marvelous achievement. Her best known volume is designated *Opuscula*. It was brought out by the Elzevirs in Leyden and went through several editions. It is composed of letters and short treatises in French, Latin, Greek and Hebrew—in verse as well as prose. [Pg 95]

Of more value, if less striking, than the productions named were the "Learned Maid's" writings in favor of the intellectual enfranchisement of her own sex. In a letter to Dr. Rivet, Professor of Theology in Leyden, she declares:

"My deep regard for learning, my conviction that equal justice is the right of all, impel me to protest against the theory which would allow only a minority of my sex to attain to what is in the opinion of all men most worth having. For, since wisdom is admitted to be the crown of human achievement, and is within every man's right to aim at in proportion to his opportunities, I cannot see why a young girl, in whom we admit a desire of self-improvement, should not be encouraged to acquire the best that life affords."

To those who objected that the distaff and the needle were sufficient to occupy women's minds, Anna Maria made answer that the words of Plutarch—"It becomes a perfect man to know what is to be known and to do what is to be done"—applied with equal truth to a perfect woman.[80]

In England, until the latter part of the nineteenth century, the educational status of women was but little better than in Germany. During the Stuart period schools for girls were so scarce that most of those who received any education at all obtained it at home under private tutors. Even then it rarely embraced more than reading, writing, needlework, singing, dancing and playing on the lute or virginal.[81] [Pg 96]

As to the higher studies for women, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu writes as follows: "My sex is usually forbid studies of this nature and folly reckoned so much our proper sphere that we are sooner pardoned any excesses of that than the least pretensions to reading or good sense. We are permitted no books but such as tend to the weakening or effeminating of the mind. Our natural defects are in every way indulged, and it is looked upon as in a degree criminal to improve our reason or fancy we have any.... There is hardly a creature in the world more despicable or more liable to universal ridicule than that of a learned woman: these words imply, according to the received sense, a tattling, impertinent, vain and conceited creature."[82]

Higher studies for their daughters were regarded by the generality of men, the same writer tells us, "as great a profanation as the clergy would do if the laity would presume to exercise the functions of the priesthood." [Pg 97]

Referring to the handicaps suffered by the women of England in the pursuit of knowledge, the same writer declares: "We are educated in the grossest ignorance, and no art is omitted

to stifle our natural reason; if some few get above their nurses' instructions, our knowledge must be concealed and be as useless to the world as gold in the mine."

Lord Chesterfield, in *His Letters to His Son*, expresses the opinion of his contemporaries when he writes on the same subject as follows: "Women are only children of a larger growth; they have an entertaining tattle, sometimes wit; but, for solid reasoning, good sense, I never in my life knew one who had it, or who reasoned or acted consequentially for twenty-four hours together.... A man of sense only trifles with them, plays with them, humors and flatters them as he does a sprightly forward child; but he neither consults them about nor trusts them with serious matters, though he often makes them believe he does both, which is the thing in the world which they are proud of; for they love mightily to be dabbling in business, which, by the way, they always spoil, and, being distrustful that men in general look upon them in a trifling light, they almost adore that man who talks to them seriously and seems to consult and trust them."[83]

And this was written by that "mirror of politeness and chivalry" whose name has for two centuries been synonymous with that of a perfect gentleman! And Lady Montagu was compelled to pen her caustic and pathetic plaints during the age of Pope, Steele, Addison, Swift,[84] Johnson, Dryden and Goldsmith—the most brilliant pleiad of literary men that England had known since the days of Shakespeare. [Pg 98]

So unnatural for women were literary and scientific pursuits regarded by all classes that the few who attained any eminence in them were classed as abnormal creatures who deserved no more consideration than did the *Précieuses* across the Channel. And so great was the power of public sentiment against women writers that Fanny Burney was afraid to acknowledge the authorship of *Evelina*. Even in Jane Austen's days, the feeling that a woman, in writing a book, was overstepping the limitations of her sex was so pronounced that she never actually avowed the authorship of those charming works which have been the delight of three generations of readers. It was this same sentiment that caused the Brontë sisters and George Eliot, as well as many other notable women, to write under pseudonyms. They feared to disclose their sex lest their works, if known as the productions of women, should be *ipso facto* branded as of inferior merit. [Pg 99]

During the period in question women fared no better in the United States than in England. They were subject to the same educational debarment and were the victims of the same snobbery and intolerance. The Pilgrim Fathers and their descendants for many generations made no secret of their belief in the mental inferiority of woman, and applied to her the gospel of liberty contained in the following words of Eve to Adam as given in *Paradise Lost*:

> "My author and dispenser, what thou bidst
> Unargued I obey; so God ordains;
> God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise."

To the Puritan of New England, as to the Puritan Milton, the relative attainments of woman and man were tersely expressed in Tennyson's couplet:

> "She knows but matters of the house,
> And he, he knows a thousand things."

To us one of the most astounding facts in the educational history of New England is the long time during which girls were without free school opportunities. Thus, although schools had been established within twenty years after the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, it was not until a century and a half later that their doors were opened to girls. The public schools

of Boston were established in 1642, but were not opened for girls until 1789; and then only for instruction in spelling, reading and composition, and that but one half of the year. There was no high school in Boston, the vaunted Athens of America, until 1852.

Harvard College was founded in 1636 for the education of "ye English and Indian youth of this country in knowledge and godlyness," but in this institution no provision was made for [Pg 100] women and its doors are still closed to them.

"The prevailing notion of the purpose of education," declares Charles Francis Adams, in speaking of Harvard College, "was attended with one remarkable consequence—the cultivation of the female mind was regarded with utter indifference; as Mrs. Abigail Adams says in one of her letters, 'it was fashionable to ridicule learning.'"[85]

It was not until 1865 that Matthew Vassar, "recognizing in women the same intellectual constitution as in man," founded the first woman's college in the United States. This was soon followed by similar institutions in various parts of this country and Europe. In less than ten years thereafter Girton and Newnham colleges were founded at Cambridge, England, in order that women might be enabled to enter upon a regular university career.

In all the universities of England, Scotland and Ireland, except Oxford, Cambridge[86] and Trinity College, Dublin, women are now admitted to all departments, pass the same [Pg 101] examinations as the men and receive the same academic degrees. Germany, whose institutions for the higher education of men have so long been justly famous, was exceedingly slow to open its universities to women, and then only after the most stubborn opposition of those who still maintained that the studies of women should be limited to the three R's and their occupations confined to the four K's. But even in this conservative country the cause of woman has at length triumphed, and she now enjoys educational advantages that a few decades ago were deemed forever impossible.

And so it is in every civilized country. Woman's long struggle for complete intellectual freedom is almost ended, and certain victory is already in sight. In spite of the sarcasm and ridicule of satirists and comic poets, in spite of the antipathy of philosophers and the antagonism of legislators who persisted in treating women as inferior beings, they are finally in view of the goal toward which they have through so many long ages been bending their best efforts. Moreover, so effective and so concentrated has been their work during recent years that they have accomplished more toward securing complete intellectual enfranchisement than during the previous thirty centuries.

From the former home of the Vikings to the romantic land of the Cid, from the capital of Holy Russia to the fair metropolis of the Golden Gate, women are now welcomed to the very institutions from which but a few years ago they were so systematically excluded. They attend the same courses as men, pass the same examinations and receive the same degrees and honors. Their sex is no longer a bar to positions and employment that only a [Pg 102] generation ago were considered proper only for the proud and imperious male. They have proved beyond cavil that genius knows not sex, and that, given a fair opportunity, they are competent to achieve success in every department of human effort.

Thus, to speak only of Europe, there are to-day women professors in the universities of Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, France, Greece and Russia, as there have been in Italy since the closing years of the Dark Ages. They lecture on science, literature, law and medicine, and in a manner to extort the admiration of their erstwhile antagonists. In Germany and Hungary there are women chemists and architects, while it is a matter of record that the best construction work done on the trans-Siberian railroad was that in charge of a woman engineer.

As an illustration of the marvelous change which has been brought about during the last three-quarters of a century in the educational status of woman, I can do no better than transcribe a few passages from a work by Sir Walter Besant describing the transformation of woman during the reign of Queen Victoria; for it applies to all civilized countries as well as to England.

"The young lady of 1837 has been to a fashionable school; she has learned accomplishments, deportment and dress. She is full of sentiment; there was an amazing amount of sentiment in the air about that time; she loves to talk and read about gallant knights, crusaders and troubadors; she gently touches the guitar; her sentiment, or her little affectation, has touched her with a graceful melancholy, a becoming stoop, a sweet pensiveness. She loves the aristocracy, even although her home is in that part of London called Bloomsbury, whither the belted earl cometh not, even though her papa goes into the City; she reads a deal of poetry, especially those poems which deal with the affections, of which there are many at this time. On Sunday she goes to church religiously and pensively, [Pg 103] followed by a footman carrying her prayerbook and a long stick; she can play on the guitar and the piano a few easy pieces which she has learned. She knows a few words of French, which she produces at frequent intervals; as to history, geography, science, the condition of the people, her mind is an entire blank; she knows nothing of these things. Her conversation is commonplace, as her ideas are limited; she can not reason on any subject whatever because of her ignorance; or, as she herself would say, because she is a woman. In her presence, and indeed in the presence of ladies generally, men talk trivialities. There was indeed a general belief that women were creatures incapable of argument, or of reason, or of connected thought. It was no use arguing about the matter. The Lord had made them so. Women, said the philosophers, can not understand logic; they see things, if they do see them at all, by instinctive perception. This theory accounted for everything, for those cases when women undoubtedly did 'see things.' Also it fully justified people in withholding from women any kind of education worthy the name. A quite needless expense, you understand."

Her amusements, we are told, were "those of an amateur—a few pieces on the guitar and the piano and some slight power of sketching or flower painting in water-colors." The literature she read "endeavored to mold woman on the theory of recognized intellectual inferiority to man. She was considered beneath him in intellect as in physical strength; she was exhorted to defer to man; to acknowledge his superiority; not to show herself anxious to combat his opinions....

"This system of artificial restraints certainly produced faithful wives, gentle mothers, loving sisters, able housewives. God forbid that we should say otherwise, but it is certain that the intellectual attainments of women were then what we should call contemptible, and the range of subjects of which they knew nothing was absurdly narrow and limited. I detect the [Pg 104] woman of 1840 in the character of Mrs. Clive Newcome, and, indeed, in Mrs. George Osborne, and in other familiar characters of Thackeray."

Then Sir Walter, turning to the young Englishwoman of 1897, thus describes her:

"She is educated. Whatsoever things are taught to the young man are taught to the young woman; the keys of knowledge are given to her; she gathers of the famous tree; if she wants to explore the wickedness of the world she can do so, for it is all in the books. The secrets of nature are not closed to her; she can learn the structure of the body if she wishes. The secrets of science are all open to her if she cares to study them.

"At school, at college, she studies just as the young man studies, but harder and with greater concentration. She has proved her ability in the Honors Tripos of every branch; she has beaten the senior wrangler in mathematics; she has taken a 'first-class' in classics, in history, in science, in languages. She has proved, not that she is a man's equal in intellect, though she claims so much, because she has not yet advanced any branch of learning, of science,

one single step, but she has proved her capacity to take her place beside the young men who are the flower of their generation—the young men who stand in the first class of honors when they take their degree....

"Personal independence—that is the keynote of the situation. Mothers no longer attempt the old control over their daughters; they would find it impossible. The girls go off by themselves on their bicycles; they go about as they please; they neither compromise themselves nor get talked about; for the first time in man's history it is regarded as a right and proper thing to trust a girl as a boy insists upon being trusted. Out of this personal freedom will come, I dare say, a change in the old feelings of young man to maiden. He will not see in her a frail, tender plant which must be protected from cold winds; she can protect herself perfectly well. He will not see in her any longer a creature of sweet emotions and pure aspirations, coupled with a complete ignorance of the world, because she already knows all that she wants to know.... [Pg 105]

"Perhaps the greatest change is that woman now does thoroughly what before she only did as an amateur."[87]

Yes, the world is beginning at last to realize the truth of the proposition which the learned Maria Gaetana Agnesi so eloquently defended nearly two centuries ago—to wit, that nature has endowed the female mind with a capacity for all knowledge, and that, in depriving women of an opportunity of acquiring knowledge, men work against the best interests of the public weal.[88]

We are at the long last near that millennium which Emerson had in mind when, in 1822, he predicted "a time when higher institutions for the education of young women would be as needful as colleges for young men"—that millennium for which women have hoped and striven ever since Sappho sang and Aspasia inspired the brightest, the noblest minds of Greece.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Demosthenes *In Neæram*, 122. Τας μεν γαρ έταιρας ήδονης ένεκ' εχομεν, τας δε παλλακας της καθ' ήμεραν θεραπεις του σωματος, τας δε γυναικας του παιδοποιεισθαι γνησιως και των ενδον ζυλακα πιστην εχειν.

As indicative of the comparative value of men and women, as members of society, in the estimation of the Greeks, Euripides makes Iphigenia give utterance to the following sentiment:

> "More than a thousand women is one man
> Worthy to see the light of life."

[2] Της τε γαρ, ύπαρχουσης ζυσεως μη χειροσι γενεσθαι ύμιν μεγαη η δοξα'και ής αν επ' ελαχιστον αρετης περι η ψογου εν αρσεσι κλεος η. Thucidides, *History of the Peloponnesian War, II*, 45.

"Phidias," Plutarch tells us in his *Conjugal Precepts*, "made the statue of Venus at Elis with one foot on the shell of a tortoise, to signify two great duties of a virtuous woman, which are to keep at home and be silent. For she is only to speak to her husband or by her husband."

[3] Ariosto, referring to the undying fame of Sappho and Corinna, expresses himself in words as beautiful as they are true, as witness the following couplet:

> Saffo e Corinna, perche furon dotte,
> Splendono illustri, e mai non veggon notte.

—Orlando Furioso, Canto XX, strophe I.

[4] The nine "Terrestrial Muses" were Sappho, Erinna, Myrus, Myrtis, Corinna, Telesilla, Praxilla, Nossis and Anyta.

The Greek poet Antipater embodies the names of the "Terrestrial Nine" in an epigram which is well rendered in the appended Latin translation:

Has divinis linguis Helicon nutrivit mulieres
Hymnis, et Macedon Pierias scopulus,
Prexillam, Myro, Anytæ os, fœminam Homerum,
Lesbidum Sappho ornamentum capillatarum.
Erinnam, Telesillam nobilem, teque Corinna,
Strenuum Palladis scutum quæ cecinit.
Nossidem muliebri lingua, et dulsisonam Myrtin,
Omnes immortalium operatrices librorum.
Novem quidem Musas magnum cœlum, novem vero illas
Terra genuit hominibus, immortalem lætitiam.

[5] Cf. *Poetriarum octo, Erinnæ, Myrus, Mytidis, Corinnæ, Telesillæ, Praxillæ, Nossidis, Anytæ fragmenta et elogia*, by J. C. Wolf Hamburg, 1734. See also the charming memoir "Sappho" by H. T. Wharton, London, 1898, and *Griechische Dicterinnen*, by J. C. Poestion, Vienna, 1876.

[6] See *Mulierum Græcarum quæ oratione prosa usæ sunt fragmenta et elogia Græce et Latine*, by J. C. Wolf, London, 1739, *Historia Mulierum Philosopharum*, scriptore Ægidio Menagio, Lugduni, 1690, *Griechische Philosophinnen*, by J. C. Poestion, Norden, 1885, and *Le Donne alle Scuole dei Filosofi Greci* in *Saggi e Note Critiche*, by A. Chiappelli, Bologna, 1895.

[7] *Woman: Her Position and Influence in Ancient Greece and Rome and Among the Early Christians*, pp. 58 and 59, by James Donaldson, London, 1907.

[8] There were several hetæræ named Lais. One of them, apparently a native of Corinth, was celebrated throughout Greece as the most beautiful woman of her age.

[9] For information respecting the hetæræ the reader is referred to the *Letters* of Alciphron, to Lucian's *Dialogues* on courtesans, and more particularly to the *Deipnosophists* of Athenæus, Chap. XIII. See also *The Lives and Opinions of the Ancient Philosophers*, by Diogenes Laertius, Bohn Edition, London.

[10] Donaldson, op. cit., pp. 61 and 62.

Adolph Schmidt, one of the late biographers of Aspasia, accepts these statements as true and credits to Aspasia the making of both Pericles and Socrates. His views are also shared by other modern writers who have made a special study of the subject.

According to some writers an indirect allusion to Aspasia's intellectual superiority is found in the *Medea* of Euripedes in the following verses of the women's chorus:

"In subtle questions I full many a time
Have heretofore engaged, and this great point
Debated, whether woman should extend
Her search into abstruse and hidden truths.
But we too have a Muse, who with our sex
Associates to expound the mystic lore
Of wisdom, though she dwell not with us all."

[11] It is proper to add that certain modern writers will not admit that Aspasia was ever an hetæra in the sense of being a courtesan. After Pericles had divorced his first wife, he lived with Aspasia as his second wife, to whom he was devoted and faithful until death. According to Greek law, which forbade Athenian citizens to marry foreign women, he could not be her legal husband; but, there can be no doubt that he always treated her with all the respect and affection due to a wife. His dying words: "Athens entrusted her greatness and Aspasia her happiness to me," clearly evince her nobility of character and the place she must ever have occupied in the great statesman's heart.

The most important notices in ancient writings, respecting Aspasia, are found in Plutarch's *Pericles*, Xenophon's *Memorabilia* of Socrates and Plato's *Menexenus*. Among the most valuable of modern works on the same subject is *Aspasie de Milet*, by L. Becq de Fouquières, Paris, 1872. Cf. also *Aspasie et le Siècle de Pericles*, Paris, 1862; *Histoire des Deux Aspasies*, by Le Comte de Bièvre, Paris, 1736, and A. Schmidt's *Sur l'Age de Pericles*, 1877-79.

[12] Under the term music, Plato, like his contemporaries, included reading, writing, literature, mathematics, astronomy and harmony. It was opposed to gymnastic as mental to bodily training. Both music and gymnastic, however, were intended for the benefit of the soul.

[13] *The Dialogues of Plato, Laws*, VII, 805, Jowett's translation, New York, 1892.

[14] Op. cit., *The Republic*, V, 451 et seq. and 466.

[15] It was the boast of the Emperor Augustus that all his clothes were woven by his wife, sister or daughter. Suetonius, in his *Lives of the Twelve Cæsars*, informs us that this great master of the world *filiam et neptes ita instituit ut etiam lanificio assuefaceret*.

[16] This type of the old Roman schoolmaster is alluded to in the following well known verses of Martial:

> "Quid tibi nobiscum est, ludi scelerate magister,
> Invisum pueris virginibusque caput?
> Nondum cristati rupere silentia Galli
> Murmure jam saevo verberibusque tonas."
> >
> —Lib. IX, 79.

which have been rendered as follows:

> Despiteful pedant, why dost me pursue,
> Thou head detested by the younger crew?
> Before the cock proclaims the day is near
> Thy direful threats and lashes stun my ear.

Martial elsewhere refers to "Ferulaeque tristes, sceptra pedagogorum"—melancholy rods, sceptres of pedagogues—and it appears from one of Juvenal's satires that "to withdraw the hand from the rod" was a phrase meaning "to leave school."

[17] *Woman Through the Ages*, Vol. I, pp. 110, 111, by Emil Reich, London, 1908.

Schoolhouses among the Romans, as well as among the Greeks, were quite different from our modern, well-equipped buildings. Usually, at least, in earlier times, instruction was given in the open air, in some quiet street corner or in *tabernæ*—sheds or lean-tos—as in certain Mohametan countries to-day. Horace refers to this in *Epistola* XX, Lib. I, when he writes:

"Ut pueros elementa docentem
Occupet extremis in vicis balba senectus."

In such schools the pupils sat on the floor or the bare ground, or, if the lessons were given on the street, they sat on the stones. There were no desks, or, if there were any benches, they had no backs. The pupils were, therefore, perforce obliged to write on their knees.

Cf. *Historical Survey of Pre-Christian Education*, pp. 278 and 346, by S. S. Laurie, London, 1900.

[18] Cf. his *Tiberius Gracchus*. Cicero says of them, "Non tam in gremio educatos quam sermone matris."

[19] Ibidem, *Life of Pompey*.

[20] *De Oratore*, Lib. III, Cap. XII.

[21] "Potiorem iam apud exercitus Agrippinam quam legatos, quam duces; compressam a muliere seditionem, cui nomen principis obsistere non quiverit." *Annales*, Lib. I, Cap. 69.

[22] *Œconomicus*, VII, 5, 6.

[23] *Epistolæ*, Lib. I, 16.

[24] Sit mihi verna satur, sit non doctissima conjux. *Epigrammata*, Lib. II, 90.

Martial's taste in this respect was the same as that of Heine, who said of the woman he loved: "She has never read a line of my writings and does not even know what a poet is," and the same as that of Rousseau, who declared that his last flame, Therèse Lavasseur, could not tell the time of day.

[25] Satire VI, 434-440.

[26] *Joannis Stobæi Florilegium*, Vol. IV, p. 212, Teubner's edition, 1857.

[27] The following is the epitaph as written by St. Jerome, "the Christian Cicero":

Scipio quam genuit, Pauli fudere parentes,
Gracchorum soboles, Agamemnonis inclyta proles,
Hoc jacet in tumulo, Paulam dixere priores,
Euxtochii genetrix, Romani prima senatus,
Pauperiem Christi et Bethlehemitica rura secuta est.

[28] In his preface to the *Commentary on Sophonius*.

[29] For an exhaustive account of the lives and achievements of St. Jerome and his noble friends, Paula and Eustochium, the reader is referred to *L'Histoire de Sainte Paule*, by F. Lagrange, Paris, 1870, and *Saint Jerome, La Société Chrétienne à Rome et l'Émigration Romaine en Terre Sainte*, by A. Thierry, Paris, 1867. Cf. also *Woman's Work in Bible Study and Translation*, by A. H. Johns in *The Catholic World*, New York, June, 1912.

[30] See *Histoire de Sainte Radegonde, Reine de France*, in Chap. XX, par Em. Briand, Paris, 1897.

[31] *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum*, Lib. IV, Cap. 23.

[32] *The Monks of the West*, Book XI, Chap. II.

[33] Vol. I, pp. 46 and 49, New York, 1871.

[34] Op. cit., Book XI, Chap. II.

It will interest the reader to know that Cædmon has a place among the saints in the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists. See the special article on him in Vol. II, p. 552, under the caption of "*De S. Cedmono, cantore theodidacto*."

[35] *Woman Under Monasticism.* Chapter IV, § 2, by Lina Eckenstein, Cambridge, 1896. In this chapter is an interesting account of the Anglo-Saxon nuns who were among the correspondents of Boniface.

[36] The reader will recall