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Renaissance and Discovery

Introduction

- Literally, the word Renaissance implies 'rebirth' or 'revival'.
- But it relates to the major changes that took place in Europe during the transition phase from the medieval-to-modern era.
- On the intellectual side, there was a resurgence of literature and art.
- The investigative spirit resulted in inventions in the field of science.
- Politically, the end of feudalism and the emergence of nation-states experienced this period.
- In the social sphere, the spirit of individualism and humanism started to dominate.
- All these transformations were referred to collectively as the Renaissance in Europe.
- By the end of the 5th century A.D., the Roman Empire declined.
- It had led to classical literature and arts being neglected.
- But these cultural treasures have been maintained in Constantinople's Eastern Roman Empire.
- Constantinople was seized by the Ottoman Turks in 1453.
- The Byzantine-Greek scholars, therefore, escaped to Rome from Constantinople.
- They carried the legacy of Greeks and Romans with them.
- A spirit of enquiry evolved with this resurgence of classical learning in Italy.
- This investigation spirit stimulated the advancement of science, art, architecture, sculpture, painting, literature, geography, and religion.



Renaissance in Italy

- For several reasons, Italy is considered the Renaissance birthplace.
- Some of them were:
- Italy was the seat of the Latin language and ancient civilization.
- The rich city-states that art and literature have been patronized in Italy like Florence and Venice.
- For instance, many scientists had been patronized by the Florence Medici family.
- The publication of the Divine Comedy by Dante (1265-1321), the biggest Italian poet, caused the Renaissance movement in Florence town.
- It's been written in Italian.
- The Renaissance then spread to other areas of Europe and in the seventeenth century attained its pinnacle.

The revival of Classical Literature

- The Renaissance's most significant contribution was the revival and teaching of ancient literature in Greek and Latin.
- Petrarch (1304–1374) was the pioneer in this effort with his deep knowledge of these languages.
- He collected and compiled many ancient manuscripts with Plato's and Aristotle's works.
- Classical learning had also been encouraged by his disciple Boccaccio.
- Ancient Greek literature was spread in Florence by many Greek scholars who came from Constantinople.
- Manuel Chrysoloras was the most notable among them.
- Also notable was Erasmus' (1463-1536) contribution to the correction and editing of Latin works.
- Erasmus also edited 'New Testament' in Greek language.
- John Gutenberg's (1398-1468) invention of the printing press in Germany had influenced Renaissance literature.
- He published the first book, The Bible.
- In England, William Caxton established a printing press.
- Soon, many printing presses came up all over Europe, providing the Renaissance movement with a stimulus.
- The availability of books at lower rates made the masses more aware of them.

Renaissance Literature

- In addition to the revival of classical literature, many works have emerged during this period in both classical languages and native languages.
- We have already spoken of the Divine Comedy of Dante written in Italian.

- Likewise, Chaucer wrote in English the **Canterbury Tales**.
- Living in Florence, Machiavelli wrote his eight-volume **History of Florence**.
- **The Prince**, a book on political science, was his most famous work.
- While Italy was home to the Renaissance's most famous literary figures. In France, England, Germany, and Spain, typical Renaissance literature can also be found.
- In England, his famous book **Utopia in Latin** was written by Sir Thomas Moore.
- The Elizabethan era, however, marked the start of the English Renaissance.
- It saw **playwrights such as William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe, and Charles Webster**; poets such as Edmund Spenser, Sydney, and Ben Johnson.
- During this time, Hakluyt wrote excellent travel accounts.
- The most typical writer of Renaissance literature was **Montaigne (1533-1592)**, the French essayist.
- His works reflect an intense interest in himself and things related to man's life.
- For centuries, his essays on education were considered important.
- In his method of writing and thinking, a precursor of **Voltaire**, **Montaigne** rebelled against the authority and tyranny of the past and earned the title of "**the first modern man.**"
- In Germany, the Bible was translated into German by Martin Luther.
- The Ship of Fools was written by Sebastian Brant.
- In Spain, the renowned Don Quixote was written by Cervantes.

Renaissance Art

- The Christian religion and the Church dominated art in the Middle Ages.
- The love of nature and the human body was provided significance during the Renaissance.
- Although the spirit of humanism prevailed, Christian was the topic of most Renaissance art.
- Renaissance painting in Italy flourished most abundantly.
- Among the Renaissance painters were Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Raphael (1483-1520).

Leonardo da Vinci:

- An artist, poet, musician, and engineer was one of the most versatile men of his time.
- He is therefore known as the "**man of the Renaissance.**"
- He was born in Florence and visited a number of nations.
- The Duke of Milan patronized him.
- The Mona Lisa and the Last Supper were his popular paintings.

Michelangelo:

- He was a painter as well as a sculptor.
- He lived in Florence with the Medici family patronizing him.
- He moved to Rome later.
- His most wonderful accomplishment in painting is the magnificent frescoes on the ceiling of the Vatican's Sistine Chapel.
- There are 145 images with 394 figures in this job, some of which are as big as 10 feet.
- His painting, The Last Judgment, is regarded as the finest in the world.

Raphael:

- With a sense of beauty, he accomplished a rare blend of devotional sensation.
- Although at the age of thirty-seven Raphael died, he created many paintings, the most familiar of which is the Madonna.
- The Venetian School is an excellent example of Renaissance art's secularization.
- Venice's artistic expression was worldly and materialistic.
- The biggest painters of Venice were Titian (1477-1576) and Tintoretto (1518-1592).

Renaissance Sculpture

- The art of sculpture during the Renaissance period also experienced advancement.
- Lorenzo Ghiberti (1378-1455) was the forerunner of Renaissance sculpture.
- His masterpiece was the magnificent doors at Florence's Baptistry.
- The beauty of these doors was valued by Michelangelo as worthy of Paradise gates.
- The statue of St. George in Florence and that of St. Mark in Venice was created by Donatello (1386-1466).
- Besides being a painter, Michelangelo was a well-known sculptor.
- For the Medici family in Florence, he created some of his finest carvings.
- The other famous sculptors of this era were Brunelleschi and Robbia.
- One of Renaissance architecture's most familiar examples is St. Peter's Church of Rome.



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