

over her children did all she could to better their condition. When the opportunity for the overthrow of feudalism presented itself, the Church was not slow to avail herself of it. The favorable moment occurred when the barons, called upon to furnish the several expeditions, had thereby to weaken their own power, for not having money at hand, their lands had to be sold in order to procure the means of equipping the forces over which the baron had been honored with the command, or that he had promised to collect. Gradually the lands came into the possession of the people, who when they owned property of their own would not submit to the treatment they heretofore undergone.

Another cause for the loss of power to the lords was their absence in the Holy Land ; for the king availed himself of this opportunity to increase his authority. But while the king assumed command over the territory of many barons, he did not do so without giving the people, some privileges in order to assure their fealty and prevent them from returning to their former allegiance. The people being in a position to demand their rights, did not fail to profit by the occasion. Furthermore they recognized that to accomplish any permanent good there must be union, and to arrive at this union, they must know each other. And would it not be well for us in this age of enlightenment, to contemplate the marvelous progress made in the direction of that much desired but as yet unaccomplished, "Parliament of nations and Brotherhood of man," during this much maligned period of history. Immediately preceding the Crusades Europe was one vast battlefield. Separated from one another, the different nations seemed to be hereditary enemies for the words of the poet,

"Oceans interposed

Make enemies of nations' who had else,
Like kindred drops, been mingled into one."

The holy wars made these people forget their private quarrels, and band themselves under the common stand-

ard of the Cross. Gradually becoming acquainted, they soon learned that they had much in common, and that after all the causes of their former wars were more visionary than real ; so that this mingling of the different peoples could not fail to have a good effect.

We are often told that while the nations of Europe were endeavoring to become more closely united, the wonderful power wielded by the popes was used not to further the interests of the people, but to better the political condition of Rome. That such was not the case we may easily perceive from a perusal of the histories of the times ; for while it is undeniable that the Roman Pontiffs exercised a vast influence we cannot find a single instance, where a pope, used this power to increase his own domain. If the popes had such unlimited power, and if they desired to use it for their own aggrandisement, would they not have endeavored to extend their temporal power ? History, however, tells us that such was not the case. Moreover, during the conduct of these wars several popes reigned—many very learned and endowed with superior genius, others not so great or talented—still each and every one of them was fired with the same desire of freeing the Holy Land.

While the people with the assistance of the popes were marching onward and upward toward a higher civilization and a better understanding of each other, a great change was coming over them. Readers of Scott have often admired the deeds of chivalry performed by his many heroes, and from his works may have a fair idea of chivalry but it is not to Scott, but to the history of the Crusades that we must look to find the grandest examples of true knighthood ; here the most prejudiced cannot fail to admire the many gallant deeds performed by the intrepid knights. No one will pretend that chivalry was unknown in the West before the Crusades, but that it attained its highest splendor during the Holy Wars, all impartial writers admit. Piety, bravery and modesty, were the