

pression, and stood most in need of protecting influence. But that it did good can hardly be doubted. It at all events gave birth to an ideal of character greatly superior not only to that of warlike barbarism, but to that of military antiquity; and if within the pale of Christendom its operation, as an elevating and humanizing influence, was mainly confined to the members of a privileged class, and altogether narrow and imperfect, it saved by its devoted valour all Christendom, and civilization at the same time, from the conquering hosts of Islam with slavery, polygamy, concubinage, fatalism, and despotism in their train. No one can look upon the sepulchral effigies of its religious warriors without paying them, across the estranging gulf of centuries, the homage of the heart. Its spirit has gone forth into the noble enterprise, the self-sacrificing beneficence, the gentle courtesy, the pure affection of modern life. Its dead forms are degraded to the uses of a social vanity which profanes the memory of Sir Galahad and Bayard.

Between social rank and official rank there is all the difference in the world. Social rank is a gratification of vanity in the particularly bad form of exclusiveness. It is an object of natural ambition to the vulgar wealth of which—mingled like tares with much commercial eminence of the nobler kind—there has recently been a rank growth in England, and which is to a great extent the parent of Jingoism as well as of this increased craving for titles and tinsel of every description. It is the great bribe which political corruption now has to hold out to millionaires of the grosser sort, who, with all their wealth, are uneasy about their social position in an aristocratic community. It is also the natural object of adoration to the shoddy class of Americans, who are too justly said to outvie in demeanour, when they get into the presence of European rank, all their rival devotees in Europe. In this sense the

love of titles is, as special pretenders to practical wisdom are always telling us, part of human nature, like any other mean tendency, on which intriguing politicians may play but which it is the mission of advancing morality to banish. Otherwise social rank supported by titles is purely artificial and may be said to be even of modern growth; for the fiefs from which the titles of territorial nobility are derived were in early times held by a tenure of military and political duty; while knighthood as we have seen was not a title but a vow, and moreover tended rather to equality than to aristocratic exclusiveness, since it placed the landless soldier on a level, as one of a brotherhood in arms, with the lord of a principality and even with a king. Official rank, on the other hand, is natural, genuine, and, if confined within proper limits, wholesome. It is the robe with which the right feeling of the community invests the holders of lawful authority, raised to that trust on account of real qualities and, therefore, reasonable objects of a respect which elevates instead of degrading those who pay it, while it is compatible with a complete absence of personal assumption and with perfect simplicity of life on the part of those to whom it is paid. We could bear a good deal more of this sentiment in these democratic communities of ours, though it will be difficult to commend the lesson to the minds of the people till the false and titular kind of rank has taken itself fairly out of the way. We could bear, too, a good deal more of reasonable ceremony and state, which are as different from etiquette, with its presentation postures, cocked hats, low-necked dresses, and anti-buggy proclamations, as sense can be from the most despicable nonsense. Ceremony, which is truly emblematic and impressive, is the stately vesture of high authority and momentous action: etiquette is childish frippery, which only ceases to be laughable when it is made the noxious instrument of political in-