

be readily admitted. With this distinction in mind, let us glance at the condition of European society in the Thirteenth Century.

We hear it from every platform, and read it in every pamphlet and magazine that ours is the great age of democracy, the era of the rights of man, and a period of general emancipation and enfranchisement. The first question that would likely come to the lips of the ordinary man of to-day, in speaking of the Thirteenth Century, is "what about the political, industrial, and social condition of men of that time?" Of course, I realize only too well that the generally prevalent notion is, but a hazy notion let us say, the echo of statements made persistently by writers of history, who, since the great religious convulsion of the Sixteenth Century, seem constitutionally unable to tell the truth in matters that concern the Catholic church. This prevalent hazy notion of the Thirteenth Century, as of all mediæval political and social conditions, pictures Europe as infested with a lot of swashbuckler knights whose caprice and passion constituted law, and the only question of politics dreamt of, was "who shall have the privilege of squeezing the most out of the common herd? the king or the barons?"

Let us see if the facts bear out this notion.

Towards the close of the Eighteenth Century, to be accurate, in the year 1789, there broke out in France a revolutionary storm unparalleled in the annals of history. This upheaval, as all men admit, was indescribably lurid and horrible, yet I am constrained to say that in many of its effects it was truly beneficent. When, after the subsidence of this revolution, the people of France searched through the ruins, they found buried under the debris of the reigns of the later Louis, particularly that of Louis the Fourteenth, the rights and prerogatives for which they had so savagely and inhumanly fought.

So the era of popular rights and representative government in France and in continental Europe generally, instead of having been begun by the French Revolution, as is commonly supposed, was simply revived and resumed after an interval of something like 500 years. And the Nineteenth Century had to go back and catch up the broken thread of civilization from the true epoch of freedom, the original epoch of representative government, the Thirteenth Century—the only age, perhaps, when there was an absence of despotism on the one hand and of demagoguery on the other.

The fiction of the dire oppression of the masses in the Middle Age—and the term Middle Age is often made to include all the cen-

Kindly Patronize Our Advertisers.