

These various armies of workers are called Orders, Congregations, etc., which from the dim past down to the present have grown and flourished under the fostering influence of the Church. In the ages of Faith, kings and princes vied with each other in extending to them a warm welcome ; for they were the harbingers of peace and progress. Withersoever they went religion took peaceful possession of the minds and hearts of men ; and the sweet odor of holiness went abroad into the land. But it has been reserved for our days, when the world has drawn cold, and when faith and fervor have waxed feeble, to see the indelicate sneer of the scoffer against those who try to reproduce the life of Christ, and consecrate, besides, their services to the advancement of His kingdom on earth.

If the question were bluntly put, what claim have Religious Orders to our respect and love? the best answer would be to present our interlocutor with a history of the Christian world. There he would find records of deeds and sacrifices unparalleled in secular history ; deeds done for God and His kingdom ; sacrifices borne for His love. The question is, indeed, frequently put by people who should know better : Of what use are those Contemplative Orders whose members spend their lives shut up in monasteries and convents ; voluntary exiles from the haunts of men ; living in the world but not of it ; taking apparently no interest in the world's affairs ; spending their days and even their nights in devotions and acts of piety ; what titles have they to our love and respect ?

If we reflect we shall find that the titles are many. When the question is put seriously, and with the desire for knowledge, we may answer that were it not for the