

tion. The other two classes, which were much the most numerous, were either serfs or villains, both of which were slaves.

The serfs were in the lowest state of slavery. All the fruits of their labor belonged to the master whose lands they tilled, and by whom they were fed and clothed.

The villains were less degraded. Like the serfs, they were attached to the soil, and were transferred with it by purchase; but they paid only a fixed rent to the landlord, and had a right to dispose of any surplus that might arise from their industry.

The term clerk was of very extensive import. It comprehended, originally, such persons only as belonged to the clergy, or clerical order, among whom, however, might be found a multitude of married persons, artisans or others. But in process of time a much wider rule was established; every one that could read being accounted a clerk, or *clericus*, and allowed the "benefit of clergy," that is, exemption from capital and some other forms of punishment, in case of crime.

Tournaments.

The splendid pageant of a tournament between knights, its gaudy accessories and trappings, and its chivalrous regulations, originated in France. Tournaments were repeatedly condemned by the Church, probably on account of the quarrels they led to, and the often fatal results. The "joust," or "just," was different from the tournament. In these, knights fought with their lances, and their object was to unhorse their antagonists; while the tournaments were intended for a display of skill and address in evolutions, and with various weapons, and greater courtesy was observed in the regulations. By these it was forbidden to wound the horse, or to use the point of the sword, or to strike a knight after he had raised his visor or unlaced his helmet. The ladies encouraged their knights in these exercises; they bestowed prizes, and the conqueror's feats were the theme of romance and song. The stands overlooking the ground, or course, were varied in the shapes of towers, terraces, galleries and pensile gardens, magnificently decorated with tapestry, pavilions, and banners. Every combatant proclaimed the name of the lady whose servant *d'amour* he was. He was wont to look up to the stand, and strengthen his courage by the sight of the bright eyes that were