John Ball spoke to me while he held the corner of the sheet: "What sayest thou, scholar? feelest thou sorrow of heart when thou lookest on this either for the man himself, or for thyself and the time when thou shalt be as he is!"

"Nay, I feel no sorrow for this; for the man is not here: this is an empty house, and the master is gone from it. Forsooth, this to me is but as a waxen image of a man; nay, not even that, for if it were an image, it would be an image of the man as he was yesterday, not as he is now. But I have no doubt that I am not moved by it; nay, I am more moved by the man's clothes and war-gear—there is more life in them than there is in this image of a man!"

I said, "And how can I sorrow for that which I cannot so much as think of? Bethink thee that while I am alive I cannot think that I shall know myself no more, and therefore I cannot think that I shall die—I can but think of myself as living in some new way."

Again he looked on me as if puzzled; then his face cleared as he said, "I would know what the Church meanceth by death, and even that I look for; and that hereafter I shall see all the deeds that I have done in the body, and what they really were, and what shall come of them; and ever shall I be a member of the Church, and that is the fellowship, then even as now."

I sighed as he spoke; then I said, "Yea, somewhat in this fashion have most of men thought, since no man that is capable of conceiving of being; and I mind me that in those stories of the old Danes, their common word for a man dying is to say, 'He changed his life.'"

"And so deemest thou?" said he.

I shook my head and said nothing.

"What hast thou thyself ever seen?" said he, "for there seemeth something betwixt us twain as it were a wall that parteth us."

"This," said I, "that though I die and yet mankind liveth, therefore I end not, since I am a man; and even so thou deemest, good sire."

But he answered me not, but clasped his hands, and said, "He that dieth in grief and torment rather than be unfaithful to the fellowship, yea rather than fail to work thine utmost for them, whereas, as thou sayest at the cross, with a few words spoken and a little huddling-up of the truth, with a few pennies paid and a few masses sung, thou mightest have had a good place on this earth and in that heaven. And as thou darest, so now doth many a poor man unnamed and unknown, and with no team to work, no well-girded altar, no comradeship to comfort them in this, fail because of fear, and are ashamed of their cowardice, and make many tales to themselves to deceive themselves, lest they should grow too much ashamed to live. And trust me if this were not so, the world would have been, and is, a dull, cold, world, shorn of its side, smothered by its own stink. Is the wall betwixt us gone, friend?"

He smiled as he looked at me, kindly, but sadly and shamefaced, and shook his head.

Then in a while he said, "Now ye have seen the images of those who were our friends, come and see the images of those once our foes."

So he led the way through the side screen into the chancel aisle, and there on the pavement lay the bodies of the feenens, their weapons taken from them and they stripped of their armour, but not otherwise of their clothes, and their faces mostly, but not all, covered. At the east end of the aisle was another altar covered with a rich cloth of figured stuff, and in the glass of the chancel arch there were new stall marks for the clerks of the work, in the midst of niches of it an image painted and gilt of a gay knight on horseback cutting his own cloak in two with his sword to the words, "Knowest thou any of these men?"

He said, "Some I should know, could I see their faces: but let them be."

"Do they evil men?" said I.

"Yes," he said, "some two or three. But I will not tell thee of them; let St. Martin, whose house this is, tell their story if he will. As for the rest, they were hapless fools, or else men who must earn their bread somehow, and were driven to this bad way of earning it: God rest their souls! I will be no tale-bearer, not even to God."

So we stood musing a little while, gazing not on the dead men but on the world which was made. We were all, which were richer and deeper coloured than those in the naves; till at last John Ball turned to me and laid his hand on my shoulder. I turned and said, "Yea, brother; now must I get me back to Will Green's house, as I promised to do to-morrow."

"Not yet, brother," said he; "I have still much to say to thee, and the night is yet young. Go we and sit in the stalls of the vicars, and let us talk and answer on matters concerning the fashion of this world of menfollc, and of this land wherein we dwell; for once more I deem of thee that thou hast seen things which I have not seen, and could not have seen." With that word he led me back into the chancel, and there we sat in the stalls of the high altar, the last end of it, facing the high altar and the great east window. By this time the chancel was getting dimmer as the moon wound round the heavens; but yet there was a twilight of the moon, so that I could still see things about me; but the lights of the lamps were not yet sunk in the chancel. The twilight would last, I knew, until the short summer night should wane, and the twilight of the dawn begin to show us the colours of all things anew.