A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.
(Continued from p. 572.)

He left off as one who had yet something else to say; and, indeed, I thought he very likely give us some word as to the try-stopping-place, and whither the army was to go from it. It was now clear to me that this gathering was but a band of an army. But much happened before John Ball spoke again from the cross, and it was on this wise. When I saw that the cross had been taken down a while ago, I thought I heard a thin sharp noise far away, somewhat to the north of the cross, which I took rather for the sound of a trumpet or horn, than for the voice of a man or any child. Win. Green also seemed to have heard it, for he set his head sharply, and then back again, and looked keenly into the crowd as though seeking to catch some one's eye. There was a very tall man standing by the same prisoner on the horse near the outskirts of the crowd, and holding his bridle. This man, who was well-armed, I saw say something to the prisoner, who stopped down and seemed to whisper him in the ear. With his head and the gun of the prisoner, which was a cleaner-limbed, better-built bolt than those belonging to the band, and the tall man quietly led him a little way from the crowd, mounted him, and rode off northward at a smart pace.

Will Green looked on sharply at all this, and when the man rode off, smiled as one who is content, and deems that all is going well, and settled himself down again to listen to the priest.

But now when John Ball had ceased speaking, and after another shout, and a bun of excited pleasure and hope that followed it, there was silence again, and the priest addressed himself to speaking once more. He paused and turned his head toward the wind, as if he heard something behind him, and when I saw that every one in the crowd was listening, though it was not over loud, far as sounds carry in such clear quiet evenings. It was the thump-a-thump of a horse drawing near at a halting pace, and when I looked back, and I knew well it was a tall man coming back with tidings, the purport of which I could well guess.

I looked up at Will Green's face. He was smiling as one pleased, and his beard, so as he nodded to me, "Yes, we shall see the grey goose fly this eve!"

But John Ball said in a great voice from the cross, "Hear ye the tidings on the way, fellows! Hold ye together and look to your gear; yet hurry not, for no great matter shall this be. I well tot there is little force between Canterbur and Kingston, for the lords are looking north of Thames toward Wat Tyler and his men. Yet well it is, well it is!"

The crowd opened and spread out a little, and the men moved about in it, some tightening a girdle, some getting their side arms more in readiness, and some who had bows stringing them.

Will Green set hand and foot to the great shapely piece of polished red yew, with its shining horn tips, which he carried, and bent it with no second thought. He laid his hand on his head over his shoulder, and drew out a long arrow, smooth, white, beautifully balanced, with a barbed iron head at one end, a horn nock and three strong goose feathers at the other. He held it loosely between the fingers and thumb of his right hand, and there he stood with a thoughtful look on his face, and in his hands one of the most terrible weapons which a strong man has ever carried, the English long-bow and cloth-yard shaft.

But while the sound of the horse's hoofs was growing nearer, and presently from the corner of the road amidst the orchards broke out our long friend, his face red in the sun shining bright. He was all his right hand as he came in sight of us, and sang out, "Bill and bows! Bills and bows!" and the whole throng turned towards him and raised a great shout.

From his mouth he leaped up at the edge of the throng, and spoke in a loud voice, so that all might hear him:

"Fellows, these are the tidings; even while our priest was speaking

we heard a horn blow far off; so I bad the sergeant we have taken, Will Lovell, tell the lord mayor there would be a full gathering, and what they were, and he did me to wit that mayhap sir John Newton was stirring from Roches- ter with his bands of men, and that the sheriff of Justice had seen them, and loved.

All that is noble, good, and true in the cause of which this teaching of individual liberty is so ardently an advocate is embodied in John Ball. Again, in answer to a question put forth in the discussion, he said, "We beg that he will support competition, which is a system that offers to the whole body of men a means of increasing power over their less crafty and more helpless fellow-creatures. Competition, as it now exists, is the greatest scourge that a people could be afflicted with. With competition for livelihood, and Richardson, who speaks of the rivalries between Socialists would heartily agree; but with the fratricidal struggle for advantage that now rages, or with any attempted modification of it, a Socialist can but wage unremitting war. Even granting that quite free competition exists, it cannot be admitted that all Socialism is realised. If all those gentlemen who devote their talents and education to teaching straw would work for Socialism, the happiness of the world would be brought nearer.

JOHN DUKIN (Proton).
up toward us as we crowded into the last close, and slowly loitered off toward the village. Nothing looked like battle; yet battle sounded in the air; for now we heard the beat of the horse-hoofs of the men-at-arms coming up the turnpike, the rolling of the thunderous cannon, and a groan louder and louder every minute; we were none too soon in turning to face them. Jack Straw was on our side of the road, and with a few gestures and a word or two he got his men together in a line.

So they were off. With the bordering line of the banner of Andrew Bell, and Ewe rising above the grey leaves of the apple-trees challenged the new comers; and of the billmen also he kept a good few ready to guard the road in case of a possible rush of the enemy.

The road that was a Roman one, was, you must remember, little the firm smooth country roads that you are used to; it was a mere track between the hedges and fields, partly grass-grown, and cut up by the deep sunk roads, the ditch, the dry stream, the bank, a stack of faggot and stubble wood on the other side, and our men threw themselves upon it and set to work to stake the road across for a rough defensive against the horsemen.

What still more on the road itself I had not much time to note, for our bowmen spread themselves out along the hedge that looked into the pasture-field, leaving some six feet between man and man; the rest of the billmen went along with the bow, and halted in clumps of some half-dozen along their line, holding themselves ready to help the bowmen if the enemy should run up under their shafts, or to run on to lengths, and come into one body if they had the chance of it. Nothing of war the place seemed defensible enough. I have said that the road down which Long Gregory came with his tidings went north; and that was its general direction; but its first reach was nearly east, so that the low sun was not in the eyes of any of us, and where Will Green took his stand, and I with him, was nearly at our backs.

William Morris.

(To be continued.)

IS SOCIALISM SPREADING?

Mr. Bradlaugh, if a recently reported interview in the Evening News be not a joke, has been trying to calm the fears of the "respectable" business classes, by assuring them that our borocœurs are "sanguine people," whom he has now ratted, by assuring them that Socialists are either crack-brained enthusiasts or canting rogues, and that Socialism is not making and cannot make any perceptible progress in this country. Sir Henry Bradlaugh certainly would not be discouragèd, or to do anything but laugh at such utterances from such a quarter, they might take heart again to find another proof amongst many of the spread of Socialist opinion, of the following very interesting sentences from which are taken from a leading article in the Daily News of November 25:—

"People who have once found that they can support themselves in idleness by sending their children to beg will not return to industry. They are as detested as the industrious young son who has been at Rome or Paris, and who can imagine why he should ever be doing any harder work than is demanded from a decorative private secretary. The street cads are not morally one who walks desolate streets at night and as long as we cannot help supporting them they will go on begging,"

"We cannot do this, and we cannot do that," people cry, because it is economically unwise. But when we see millions of people doing anything at all. If nearly everything that is proposed be economically unwise, what is left that is economically sound? Is it to extort the utmost possible per centage out of work paid for at wages which must be eked out by prostitution, theft, and begging? If that kind of economy be sound economically, it is rotten every other way. One might feel it a relief to do something positively that was useful for all, or for doing nothing in the interest of economical sordicity. It is not institutions, enactments, and laws that destroy poverty, but the class to which poverty belongs; it is nothing but a sense of brotherhood and a sense of honour. Who does not own the same manhood in his blood, who makes thirty per cent. out of the folly and ignorance of undergraduates? If we are to remain in the same condition, that is not 10 per cent., but 20 per cent., to be made out of work paid at starvation wages be acceptable and honourable? Not many of us, perhaps, would like to be wealthy, for all that; but it is in the nature of things, that human beings should extend universally to such and such a class of society, to every healthy, wealthy, who is not to be excluded. Wealth is acquired by a system of artificially nurcing superfluous noble families, the rest of the population to be maintained and supported by a demand for liquor! These are matters that divines may put to the con- sciences of their flock. The prospects of Society will begin to improve in 1886, when we shall have money thus gotten, Oct 5th.

T. B. Rivers

Some unemployed men were charged at West Ham Police-court the other day with begging. What on earth are the unemployed to do? They can't get work, and they must not beg or steal. Their numbers increase rapidly, and they are not likely much longer to be content to sink away and die quietly in the slums. Who can doubt that at some not distant day they will be in unvanquishable number, and claim their place at Nature's table, now denied them by the rapacious classes who "rob and rule" us?

Lissagary's 'History of the Commune.'

This important work has at last appeared in English, and we do not hesitate to say that it ought to be in the hands of every one.

The history of the Commune, as presented in the generally unbiased narrative of Lissagary, bears a profound moral with it. It is the story of the struggle of noble individualism, unbridled and unconfined, and, in the ordinary sense, great opportunities, with foolish vanity, personal squabbling, inefficiency of organisation, and pedantry, resulting in the ascendency of the latter, and consequent general collapse. The Versailles entered upon a viâ already prepared for them. And it will be so again in the next great popular movement, should due subordination of function and organisation not be held; and the members of noble societies, the leaders of our day, will see precisely the same elements at work in them which caused the fall of the Commune with the horrors of the "bloody week." Again and again as he reads the story of the tragedy of July, the friend of the Cause feels inclined to write his hand on the opportunities lost. Lost because everything was in confusion, nearly everybody wanting to do everybody else's work, and consequently doing no work at all, and many cases doubtless with the best intentions. Even at the supreme hour, when the Versailles were actually inside Paris, there was a chance of rolling back the invasion by means of a cross fire between Montmartre and the Pantheon, had these portions been properly fortified and partitioned, and manned by one there. Again, when the Commune was in death-throes, street after street was sacri- ficed because officers and others carrying important messages were stopped and forced to do the ordinary work of barricade making—the last defences being thus literally unmanned before a false and idiotic notion of equality.

We wish that every true Socialist at heart whose led astray by disintegrative tendencies would read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the important lessons of this volume. The cause was wrecked in 1871, in great part at least, not because of spies or traitors, for there were marvellously few of those who took any prominent part in the movement, but far more likely by sheerly disinterested motives, or of attempts to personal gain out of it—but because of well-meaning conceived, faddy, cantankerous persons, who waited time in long nights, and their vanities, and, who would neither do any work themselves nor let any one else do it for them. Other follies there were of course, although they were doubtless partly caused by the above, such as making decrees and not getting them respected. The情节 of the Versailles had a one of the most fatal of these. Had the architect been shot on the first corroboration of the fact that Federal prisoners were being butchered at Versailles, the butcheries might have been checked. As it was, he was reserved only to shot after they had completed their work, all, save to give the civilised world an opportunity of displaying its capacities in shamming horror. The translation of the book, we should say, is excellent.

E. B. Bax.

If your assembly can't agree about its duty in politics, drop the subject and keep to the study of the principles until all learn more of the Industrial News.

"Where," cried Ale Hewitt, "where is the man who said that the 68,000 gentlemen who voted for our admirable friend Henry George were anarchists and communists? My feet are cold, and I would like to warm them by kicking the crumpled who shunned these 68,000 gentlemen."—John Stuart's Paper.