THE POLITICAL CRISIS.

It is difficult to write about the "Political Crisis" seriously, except so far as contempt may be serious. The bespattering with flattery for their patriotism of those members of the Government who are wanted to take themselves off; the flutter among the lesser men lest they too should be pulled off their perch and be boiled down for gravy for the new coalition pie; the terror of some Conservatives, like the Standard, lest Mr. Chamberlain should climb half-way down the tree; Mr. Goschen's anxiety that his position should not be misunderstood, whereas all the while it is as plain as the nose on Mr. Goschen's face that he is in a hurry to get away. All this is sufficiently grotesque, and once more illustrates happily enough the dignity and honesty of Parliamentary Government, but otherwise does not concern us in the least.

All this on the Tory side; the Liberal position is perhaps a little more noteworthy, but also considerably more discreditable. The confusion in the Tory camp has given them hope of success once more, and it is quite clear that most of those who may be called the responsible men of the party do in consequence look upon "compromise" in quite a different light from that in which it showed a few weeks ago. There are rumours afloat that Mr. Gladstone is to go, and that to cut down Home Rule Bill, feeble as it is already, so that it would amount to nothing but a perpetual English-Irish squabble in the Westminster Parliament. This rumour the Daily News denies with all official solemnity; but as it admits the almost plenary power of the "Conference" to be held presently, which will have only one sincere Home Ruler (Mr. Morley) in it, this denial is not of much significance. Mr. Labouchere put the matter on a reasonable footing in his reading of the Bill to practical point out that no compromise between those who were for Home Rule and those who were against it could mean anything but surrender on one side or the other.

Clearly whatever comes of it the Gladstonians are anxious to surrender, if only they can put a good face on it and hoodwink the rank and file of their party to the extreme baseness of the proceeding; otherwise they would have insisted on genuine Home Rule being made the basis of the Conference. It can scarcely be doubted that the Responsible Liberals will, if they dare, heap the Irish Jonah overboard; the only thing which will prevent them from doing so will be their fear of the consequences of their being accused of his murder when they reach the shore. Even if they do not they will have weakened themselves by their shilly-shally ways; if they do, no man with even the remains of wits in his head will take the trouble to distinguish them from their Tory competitors for leaves and fishes.

The moral to be drawn from these corrupt and degrading dodges and shirking is simple. Let the genuine Radicals turn from the collection of incompetent tricksters, and the banded and disgraced idols whom they hold up to our worship, and concern themselves with the serious questions of the day. Shall England make alliance with reactionary powers to crush our Revolution? Men cannot have some primitive war on hand in order to launch a fresh churning-market for the harm of barbarous countries and our own unhappy population! Must we always have a mass of unemployed workmen hanging about, till to many of them, by the force of habit, work becomes impossible, and they are turned into mere loafers, a constant disgrace and a periodical terror to Society? Are we to be for ever satisfied with bestowed "mero subsistence livelihood" (i.e., semi-starvation) on the lower part of our lives? Must not the rank of the artisan class for ever be condemned to live poorly, without leisure or pleasure, in constant anxiety of falling into the gulf below them? Is the lower middle-class for ever to be stupid, vacant, and vulgar, and the upper middle-class to oscillate between blank Philistinism and simpering preciosity? In fine, why are these "classes," and what end do they serve? Let them face these questions unconventionally, and with the spirit of the age, without the idea of the artist's life for ever to be condemned to live poorly, without leisure or pleasure, in constant anxiety of falling into the gulf below them? They are in the middle-class for ever to be stupid, vacant, and vulgar, and the upper middle-class to oscillate between blank Philistinism and simpering preciosity? In fine, why are these "classes," and what end do they serve? Let them face these questions unconventionally, and with the spirit of the age, without the idea of the artist's life for ever to be condemned to live poorly, without leisure or pleasure, in constant anxiety of falling into the gulf below them?}

A DREAM OF JOHN BALL

(Continued from p. 18.)

He said: "Many strange things hast thou told me that I could not understand; yea, some my wit so failed to compass, that I cannot so much ask thee questions concerning them; but of some matters would I ask thee, and I must hasten, for in very sooth the night is worn old and grey. When thou sayest that in the days to come, when there shall be no labouring men who are not thralls after their new fashion, that their lords shall be many and very many, it seemeth to me that thou dost speak of a time when they are mistress of them, and of themselves, so that still they go to me with the offer of their slaves, and the lords do wear grey. When thou sayest that in the days to come, when there shall be no labouring men who are not thralls after their new fashion, that their lords shall be many and very many, it seemeth to me that thou dost speak of a time when they are mistress of them, and of themselves, so that still they go to me with the offer of their slaves, and the lords do wear grey. When thou sayest that in the days to come, when there shall be no labouring men who are not thralls after their new fashion, that their lords shall be many and very many, it seemeth to me that thou dost speak of a time when they are mistress of them, and of themselves, so that still they go to me with the offer of their slaves, and the lords do wear grey."

"John Ball," said I, "mastership hath many shifts whereby it striiveth to keep itself alive in the world. And now hear a marvel: whereas thou sayest these two times that out of one man ye may get but one man's work, in days to come one man shall do the work of a hundred men—yea, of a thousand or more: and this is the shift of mastership that shall make many masters and many rich men."

John Ball laughed. "Great is my harvest of riddles to-night," said he. "For every man a sleep, and to his port, while he is a working, ye shall but make two men or three at the most out of him." I said: "Sawest thou ever a weaver at his loom?"

"Yea," said he; "I saw a weaver and it was a little, and then said: "Yet I marvilled not at it: but now I marvel, because I know what thou wouldest say. Time was when the shuttle was thrust in and out of all the thousand threads of the warp, and it was long to do; but now the spindles go up and down as the master's feet move, and this and that of the warp cometh forward and the shuttle goeth in one shot through all the thousand warps. Yea, so it is that this multiplieth a man many times to be so. But let thy word go already; and hath been seen, menessest, for many hundred years."

"Yeas," said I, "but what hitherto needed the masters to multiply him more? For many hundred years the workman was a thrall bought and sold at the master's will, and other were as these, and in them there had been a villain—that is, a working-beast and a part of the stock of the manor on which he lived; but thou and the like of thee shall free him, and then is mastership put out of the world for what is the better of the two? when he then, when he no longer owenneth him by law as his chattel, nor any longer by law owenneth him as stock of his land, if the master hath not that which he on whom he liveth may not lack and live withal, and cannot have without selling him?"
January 15, 1887.

THE COMMONWEAL

CORRESPONDENCE.

HANDS ALL ROUND.

It is known to the readers of 'Josephus' that the cause of the Jewish
betrayal by the Romans was due to the differences which existed between
the races. We are not now to discuss that matter. And as the
weaver beareth away his newly-woven stuff when he is afraid, and the
lady come home of it; and the weaver who standeth by and whitewelf the
Hunter's up! the white, or looking to
half-a-dozen looms and binding the
were not to lose the smith, and every worker in metals,
and all other crafts, that it shall be for them looking on and tending,
as with the man that sitteth in the cart while the horse draws. Yes,
and at the same time the huckster's goods shall be
longer the weaver fear afield in the morning with his book over
his shoulder, and smite and bind and smite again till the sun is down
and the moon is up. The Englishmen as a race shall be
in their homes and fields,
and the smith, and every workman, and
their wares shall be sold in the country-side,
and the land shall be as one place,
and the thing shall reap and gather and bind,
and the do the work of many. Imagine this in th\my
I think therefore, and the existence of
men, and the ancient philosophy, told by
minister,
and then tell me what shoul\I
dream that the
life
of men

would be amidst all this, men such as these men of the township
and the men of the Canterbury

"Yes," said he; "but before I tell thee my thoughts of thy tale of
wonder, I would ask thee this: In those days when men work so easily,
surely they shall make more wares than they can use in one coun-
side, or one good town, whereas in another, things have not
gone as well, they shall have less than they need; and even so it is
with us now, and thereof cometh scarcity and famine; and if people
might make more things they will not have to do that
which they are not
for that one country-side hath more than enough while another hath less;
for the goods shall abide there in the storehouses of the rich place till
they perish. So that if be so in the days of wonder ye tell of (and I see
no reason why it should not be so,) but that by
of the

I smiled again and said: "Yes, but it shall not be so; not only
the man of the field, or the man of the town, but
of distance from one place shall be another shall be
nothing, so that the
I
which lie ready for market in Durham in the evening may
be in London on the morrow morning; and the men of Wales
may eat corn of Egypt and the men of Egypt eat corn of
Wales; so that
so far as the fitting of goods to market goes, all the land shall be as
one

Brother," said he, "nessemeth some doleful mockery lieth
under these joyful tidings of thine; since thou hast already partly told me
to my sad bewilderment what the life of man shall be in those days. Yet
will I now for a little all that aside to consider thy strange
tale as of a minstrel from over sea, even as thou biddest me. There-
fore I will ask of thee, how is it known that
unless these folk of
England change as it is known, or they be
of the south, for good and for evil, I can think no other than that
I think that
the goods shall not be, but shall be,
be, to say, at every man's door, and wares which now ye do
precious and dearth, shall then be common things bought and sold
for little price at every huckster's stall. Say then, John, shall
those things ever be, and plentiful of ease and contentment for all
men?"

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those things ever be, and plentiful of ease and contentment for all
men?"

"No,"

"Yes," he said; "but how could I deem that such things could be
when those days should be come wherein man could make things
work for them?"

(To be concluded.)

WILLIAM MORRIS.