

follow it. The control of all things in the hands of a class, labour subordinate to that class and compelled to toil for its enrichment and cease when it is satisfied, this now makes an overplus of wealth entail dire misery upon its producers; but when the community regulates its own affairs without the aid of heaven-born potentates and "captains of industry," every jot added to its stored-up wealth will mean more chance of enjoyment to every one of its members. To-day an "over-production" of wealth, as it means only that more has been produced than is required by the dominant class, conduces to the increased poverty of the workers by throwing many of them out of employment; but when "over-production" means that more goods have been produced in a community than are required for immediate consumption, labour may be turned to any field of exercise in which it is required. Thus there would be continual and progressive accumulation of riches in the hands of the community, most of it in the shape of buildings and other enduring forms. Not only would the increase of durable possessions enlarge the common resources, but would also yield increase of leisure and of comfort. The whole pressure of circumstances would be against poor materials or bad workmanship, for either would signify conscious unimpelled waste of labour.

Even those who now shrink from the prospect of communal homes and life, would forget their fears were they to think over what Socialism means actualised. A people free from class domination; production wholly for use; commerce merely the exchange of equivalents between commune and commune; co-operation in all things replacing the fierce unrelenting warfare waged now between man and man, class and class; energies now directed upon useless or harmful pursuits restored to their due career; work for all, food for all, rest for all; these things will ensue unavoidably upon the accomplishment of the Social Revolution.

It is unquestionably true that hitherto the experiments made by Owen, Godin and others in Europe, and the various communities in America, have resulted rather in bare bleak usefulness than in comfortable beauty. We must bear in mind, however, that all these have been *but* experiments; that they have been isolated amid the ocean of commercialism; that they have been outposts as it were pushed forward into the enemy's country by the advancing army of the Revolution; that lacking the sense of security and compelled to exercise never ending vigilance as an indispensable condition of continued existence, they have never found space wherein to cultivate repose. But when society has once for all freed itself from injustice, and the people own all things necessary for their livelihood, men will be enabled to start from the foundation and build slowly up. First they will set about arranging all things, so that every one, old and young, has enough of all requisite material supplies; having done this, they will go on step by step as opportunities arise. The commune, or the members of them, will be incessantly adapting their lives and customs to increased knowledge, for science will not then be the servitor of a class, but the handmaid of society. As education advances, and men discover gradually the gain accruing from combination for definite purposes, communal methods of life will be more and more adopted, and we may picture to ourselves the cluster of good houses round the great common hall for lectures and the like, while amid the trees arise the roofs of stately buildings, interspersed with cloistered squares and glorious gardens, such as we can but think of with a sigh.

Art will arise as never in the world before. Hitherto she has expressed the power of a nation upon the brink of its decay, has lavished her profusion upon the triumph of a tyrant or the luxury of a class. Then she will manifest herself in her full majesty as the expression of a people's delight in life. However men distribute themselves, in city or small thorp, they will look to their surroundings and will make them beautiful. It will not be only the *kitchen* and its work that will be the common care; library and lecture-hall, theatre and garden will receive their due need of attention, nor will schools, colleges, and playgrounds be overlooked. Architecture emancipated from commercialism, released from the yoke of the speculative builder, will unite with sculpture and painting freed from the glorification of hereditary plunderers or "self-made" parasites, to provide adequate abodes for a folk who have cast out shoddy from among them; for whom there is no class-division or caste-prejudice; who see that all are educated and cared for; who are free from the corruption of excessive one-sided wealth or the crippling effects of poverty. This is a fair world toward which we wend, not "a nameless city in a distant sea," but one to be realised even here by the organised educated force of a combined people.

H. HALLIDAY SPARLING.

* WANT OF IMAGINATION IN THE COMFORTABLE CLASSES. — People in general have too little imagination, and habit does not tend to improve it. Hunger with themselves is brief; they can soon satisfy it. Cold is brief; they can go to the fire. They become unable to sympathise with the continual operation of want. Take one of the clergyman, for instance, who has been writing addresses of late to the poor to advise them to bear hunger and cold with patience. One of these gentlemen sits down to his writing-table, with his feet on a rug, before a good fire, after an excellent breakfast, to recommend to others the endurance of evils, the least part of which would rouse him into a remonstrance with his cook or his coal-merchant, perhaps destroy his temper, and put him into a state of un-Christian folly. His dinner is not ready when he returns from his ride. "The very shameful of the cook," quoth he, "I have eaten nothing to signify since breakfast, and am ready to sink." The dinner is brought in with all expedition, and he does sink—that is to say, into an easy chair, and fish, flesh, and fowl sink into him. Little does he think, and less does he endeavour to think (for the thought is not a comfortable one) that the men to whom he wrote his address in the morning are in the habit of feeling this sinking sensation from morning till night, and of seeing their little crying children suffering from a distress which they know to be so wretched. Many of these poor people "sink" into the grave.—*Leigh Hunt's 'Table-Talk'*

A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.

(Continued from p. 258.)

I entered the door and started at first with my old astonishment, with which I had woke up, so strange and beautiful did this interior seem to me, though it was but a pothouse parlour. A quaintly carved side-board held an array of bright pewter pots and dishes and wooden and earthen bowls; a very stout oak table went up and down the room, and a carved oak chair stood by the chimney corner now filled by a very old man dim-eyed and white-bearded. That, except the rough stools and benches on which the company sat, was all the furniture. The walls were panelled roughly enough with oak boards to about six feet from the floor, and about three feet of plaster above that was wrought in a pattern of a rose stem running all round the room, very freely and roughly done, but with (as it seemed to my unused eyes) wonderful skill and spirit. On the hood of the great chimney a huge rose was wrought in the plaster and brightly painted in its proper colours. There were a dozen or more of the men I had seen coming along the street sitting there, some eating and all drinking; their cases bows leaned against the wall, their quivers hung on pegs in the panelling, and in a corner of the room I saw half-a-dozen bill-hooks that looked made more for war than for hedge-shearing, with ash handles some seven foot long. Three or four children were running about among the legs of the men, heeding them mighty little in their bold play, and the men seemed little troubled by it, although they were talking earnestly and seriously too. A well-made comely girl leaned up against the chimney close to the gaffer's chair, and seemed to be in waiting on the company; she was clad in a close-fitting gown of bright blue cloth, with a broad silver girdle, very daintily wrought, round her loins, a rose-wreath was on her head and her hair hung down unbound; the gaffer grumbled a few words to her from time to time, so that I judged he was her grandfather.

The men all looked up as we came into the room, my mate leading me by the hand, and he called out in his rough good-tempered voice, "Here, my masters, I bring you tidings and a tale; give it meat and drink that it may be strong and sweet."

"Whence are thy tidings, Will Green?" said one.

My mate grinned again with the pleasure of making his joke once more in a bigger company: "It seemeth from heaven, since this good old lad hath no master," said he.

"The more fool he to come here," said a thin man with a grizzled beard, amidst the laughter that followed, "unless he had the choice given him between hell and England."

"Nay," said I, "I come not from heaven, but from Essex."

As I said the word a great shout sprang from all mouths at once, as clear and sudden as a shot from a gun. For I must tell you that I knew somehow, but I know not how, that the men of Essex were gathering to rise against the poll-groat bailiffs and the lords that would turn them all into villeins again, as their grandfathers had been. And the people was weak and the lords were poor; for many a mother's son had fallen in the war in France in the old king's time, and the Black Death had slain a many; so that the lords had bethought them: "We are growing poorer, and these upland-bred villeins are growing richer, and the guilds of craft are waxing in the towns, and soon what will there be left for us who cannot weave and will not dig? Good it were if we fell on all who are not guildsmen or men of free land, if we fell on scutage tenants and others, and brought both the law and the strong hand on them, and make them all villeins in deed as they are now in name; for now these rascals make more than their bellies need of bread, and their backs of homespun, and the overplus they keep to themselves; and we are more worthy of it than they. So let us get the collar on their necks again, and make their day's work longer and their hever-time shorter, as the good statute of the old king bade. And good it were if the Holy Church were to look to it (and the Lollards might help herein) that all these naughty and wearisome holidays were done away with; or that it should be unlawful for any man below the degree of a squire to keep the holy days of the Church, except in the heart and the spirit only, and let the body labour meanwhile; for does not the Apostle say 'if a man work not, neither should he eat'? And if such things were done, and such an estate of noble rich men and worthy poor men upholden for ever, then would it be good times in England, and life were worth the living."

All this were the lords at work on, and such talk I knew was common not only among the lords themselves, but also among their sergeants and very serving-men. But the people would not abide it; therefore, as I said, in Essex they were on the point of rising, and word had gone how that at St. Albans they were wellnigh at blows with the Lord Abbot's soldiers; that north away at Norwich John Litster was wiping the woad from his arms, as who would have to stain them red again, but not with grain or madder; and that the valiant tiler of Dartford had smitten a poll-groat bailiff to death with his lath-rendering axe for mishandling a young maid, his daughter; and that the men of Kent were on the move.

Now, knowing all this I was not astonished that they shouted at the thought of their fellows the men of Essex, but rather that they said little more about it; only Will Green saying quietly, "Well, the tidings shall be told when our fellowship is greater; fall now to the meat, brother, that we may the sooner have thy tale." As he spoke the blue-clad damsel bestirred herself and bought me a clean trencher—that is, a square piece of thin oak board scraped clean—and a pewter pot of liquor. So without more ado, and as one used to it, I drew my knife out of my girdle and cut what I would of the flesh and

bread on the table. But Will Green mocked at me as I cut, and said, "Certes, brother, thou hast not been a lord's carver, though but for thy word thou mightest have been his reader. Hast thou seen Oxford, scholar?"

A vision of grey-roofed houses and a long winding street and the sound of many bells came over me at that word as I nodded "Yes" to him, my mouth full of salt pork and rye-bread; and then I lifted my pot and we made the clattering mugs kiss and I drank, and the fire of the good Kentish mead ran through my veins and deepened my dream of things past, present, and to come, as I said: "Now hearken a tale, since ye will have it so. For last autumn I was in Suffolk at the good town of Dunwich, and thither came the keels from Iceland, and on them were some men of Iceland, and many a tale they had on their tongues; and with these men I foregathered, for I am in sooth a gatherer of tales, and this that is now at my tongue's end is one of them." So such a tale I told them, long familiar to me; but as I told it the words seem to quicken and grow, so that I knew not the sound of my own voice, and they ran almost into rhyme and measure as I told it; and when I had done there was silence awhile, till one man spake, but not loudly: "Yea, in that land was the summer short and the winter long; but men lived both summer and winter; and if the trees grew ill and the corn throve not, yet did the plant called man thrive and do well. God send us such men even here." "Nay," said another, "such men have been and will be, and belike are not far from this same door even now." "Yes," said a third, "hearken a stave of Robin Hood; maybe that shall hasten the coming of one I wot of." And he fell to singing in a clear voice, for he was a young man, and to a strange wild melody, one of those ballads which in an incomplete and degraded form you have read perhaps. My heart rose high as I heard him, for it was concerning the struggle against tyranny for the freedom of life, how that the wild wood and the heath weather was better than the court and the cheeping town; of the taking from the rich to give to the poor; of the life of man rather than the existence of machines. The men all listened eagerly, and at whiles took up as a refrain a couplet at the end of a stanza with their strong and rough, but not unmusical voices; and as it were a picture of the wild-woods passed by me, as they were indeed, and no park-like dainty glades and lawns, but rough and tangled thicket and bare waste and heath, solemn under the morning sun, and dreary with the rising of the evening wind and the drift of the night-long rain.

But amidst my musing the song dropped suddenly, and one of the men held up his hand as who would say, Hist! Then through the open window came the sound of another song, gradually swelling as though sung by men on the march. This time the melody was a piece of the plain-song of the Church, familiar enough to me to bring back to my mind the great arches of some cathedral in France and the canons singing in the choir.

All leapt up and hurried to take their bows from wall and corner; and some had bucklers withal, circles of boiled and hardened leather, some two hand-breadths across, with iron or brass bosses in the centre. Will Green went to the corner where the bills leaned against the wall and handed them round to the first comers as far as they would go, and out we all went gravely and quietly into the village street and the fair sunlight of the calm afternoon, now waning into evening. None had said anything since we first heard the new come singing save that as we went out of the door the ballad-singer clapped me on the shoulder and said: "Was it not sooth that I said, brother, that Robin Hood should bring us John Ball?"

The street was pretty full of men by then we were out in it, and all faces turned toward the cross. The song still grew nearer and louder, and even as we looked we saw it turning the corner through the hedges of the orchards and closes; a good clump of men, more armed, as it would seem, than our villagers, as the low sun flashed back from many points of bright iron and steel. The words of the song could now be heard, and amidst them I could pick out Will Green's challenge to me and my answer; but as I was bending all my mind to disentangle more words from the music, suddenly from the new white tower behind us clashed out the church bells, harsh and hurried at first, but presently falling into measured chime; and at the first sound of them a great shout went up from us and was echoed by the new comers, "John Ball hath rung our bell!" Then we pressed on, and presently we were all mingled together at the cross.

Will Green had good-naturedly thrust and pulled me forward, so that I found myself standing on the lowest step of the cross, his seventy-two inches of man on one side of me. He chuckled while I panted, and said: "There's for thee a good hearing and seeing stead, old lad. Thou art tall across thy belly and not otherwise, and thy wind, belike, is none of the best, and but for me thou wouldst have been amidst the thickest of the throng, and have heard words muffled by Kentish bellies and seen little but swinky woollen elbows and greasy plates and jacks. Look no more on the ground, as though thou sawest a hare, but let thine eyes and thine ears be busy to gather tidings to hear back to Essex—or heaven!"

I grinned good-fellowship at him but said nothing, for in truth my eyes and ears were as busy as he would have them to be. A buzz of general talk went up from the throng amidst the regular cadence of the bells, which now seemed far away and as it were that they were not swayed by hands, but were living creatures making that noise of their own wills.

I looked around and saw that the new comers mingled with us must have been a regular armed band; all had bucklers slung at their backs, few lacked a sword at the side. Some had bows, some "staves"—that is, bills, pole-axes, or pikes. Moreover, unlike our villagers, they had

defensive arms. Most had steel-caps on their heads, and some body armour, generally a "jack," or coat into which pieces of iron or horn were quilted; some had also steel or steel-and-leather arm or thigh pieces. There were a few mounted men among them, their horses being big-boned hammer-headed beasts, that looked as if they had been taken from plough or wagon, but their riders were well armed with steel armour on their heads, legs, and arms. Amongst the horsemen I noted the man that had ridden past me when I first awoke; but he seemed to be a prisoner, as he had a woollen hood on his head instead of his helmet, and carried neither bill, sword, nor dagger. He seemed by no means ill-at-ease, however, but was laughing and talking with the men who stood near him.

Above the heads of the crowd, and now slowly working towards the cross, was a banner on a high-raised cross-pole, a picture of a man and woman half clad in skins of beasts on a background of green trees, the man holding a spade and the woman a distaff and spindle, rudely done enough, but yet with a certain spirit and much meaning; and underneath this symbol of the early world and man's first contest with nature were the written words:

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Where was then the gentlemann?"

The banner came on and through the crowd, which at last opened where we stood for its passage, and the banner-bearer turned and faced the throng and stood on the first step of the cross beside me. A man followed him, clad in a long dark-brown gown of coarse woollen, girt with a cord, to which hung a "pair of beads" (or rosary, as we should call it to-day) and a book in a bag. The man was tall and big-boned, a ring of dark hair surrounded his priest's tonsure; his nose was big but clear out and with wide nostrils; his shaven face showed a longish upper lip and a big but not blunt chin; his mouth was big and the lips closed firmly; a face not very noteworthy but for his grey eyes well opened and wide apart, at whiles lighting up his whole face with a kindly smile, at whiles set and stern, at whiles resting in that look as if they were gazing at something a long way off, which is the wont of the eyes of the poet or enthusiast.

He went slowly up the steps of the cross and stood at the top with one hand laid on the shaft, and shout upon shout broke forth from the throng. When the shouting died away into silence of the human voices, the bells were still quietly chiming with that far-away voice of theirs, and the long-winged dusky swifts, by no means scared by the concourse, swung round about the cross with their wild squeals; and the man stood still for a little, eying the throng, or rather looking first at one and then another man in it, as though he were trying to think what such an one was thinking of, or what he were fit for. Sometimes he caught the eye of one or other, and then that kindly smile spread over his face, but faded off it into the sternness and sadness of a man who has heavy and great thoughts hanging about him.

But when John Ball first mounted the steps of the cross a lad at some one's bidding had run off to step the ringers, and so presently the voice of the bells fell dead, leaving on men's minds that sense of blankness or even disappointment which is always caused by the sudden stopping of a sound one has got used to and found pleasant. But a great expectation had fallen by now on all that throng, and no word was spoken even in a whisper, and all men's hearts and eyes were fixed upon the dark figure standing straight up now by the tall white shaft of the cross, his hands stretched out before him, one palm laid upon the other. And for me, as I made ready to hearken, I felt a joy in my soul that I had never yet felt.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(To be continued.)

"DIVES AND HIS DINNERS."

The *Pall Mall Gazette* of November 10 contains the following suggestive letter from the Rev. G. S. Reaney:

"Sir,—The Lord Mayor's banquet, you say, cost £2500. What could be done with that down east? This: a good dinner of beefsteak pudding and coffee for 200,000 men, or a meal for 1000 men daily for seven months, or a dinner every day for 1000 children for twelve months. This is not fiction, but fact, as I have given 100 men a good dinner for £1, 5s., and a dinner for 100 children for less than half. Dives ought to be more than satisfied with his Guildhall banquet."

Anent the same subject a correspondent sends the following grim suggestion for the next 9th of November foolery, if unhappily the miserable make-believe festival survive the shock it has received:

"I would suggest to the city magnates that as they parade their fine clothes, their sables and their ermines, before the shivering multitude to make it understand the difference between the clothing of the rich and the poor, so they might further heighten the contrast by having a number of men appointed to carry the smoking tureens of turtle-soup in their procession, and portable fires might be arranged before which the legs of mutton and sirloins of beef could be cooked as the mayor moves on to Westminster, so that the people might get an inexpensive treat by smelling the savoury dishes as they passed by. Of course this would be a good idea, and give a good deal of employment, not only in carrying the viands, but in providing a staff of policemen to keep the famishing ones from rushing in to seize them."

Will the monopoly press inform us whether it would permit every producer to enjoy the products of his own labour or not? If so, will they tell us why any one should be compelled to give any portion of the products of his labour to any one for an opportunity to sell?