A DREAM OF JOHN BALL

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I entered the door and started at first with my old astonishment, with which I had waked up, and been so much taken up with the idea of the lass, as to forget the house; but it was there, as I supposed; and I was not a little surprised to find myself in the drawing-room, where I had lain all night on the floor. The room was furnished with a great deal of furniture, and was very well lighted by the still shining chandeliers. The walls were papered with rich stuffs, and the curtains were made of heavy silk, with gold and silver lace. The ceiling was painted with scenes from the life of the squire, and the walls were hung with portraits of his ancestors. The furniture was of the finest material, and the room was filled with the heavy fragrance of flowers. It was a delightful place, and I was glad to be there. I sat down and admired the room, and then went to the window and looked out. The sun was shining brightly, and the air was fresh and invigorating. I looked around me, and saw the beauty of the world, and the grandeur of the squire's estate. I felt happy and contented, and I knew that I was where I belonged.
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THE COMMONWEAL.

breath on the table. But Will Green smoked as I sat, and said, "Cecil, brother, thou hast not been a lads' charge, though but for the few that might follow ye this reader. hast thou a scholar?"

A vision of grey-eyed horses and a long winding street and the sounds of the town were ever over me at that word, as I nodded "Yes," to him, my mouth full of salt pork and eye-bread; and then I lifted my pet and we made the clattering wings like and I drank, and the fire of the good English meal ran through my veins and deepened my appreciation of things past, present, and to come, as I said, "Now hearken a tale, since ye will have it so. For last summer I was in Sicily at the good town of Catenaccio, and I came across some of the things that passed, and some that passed inside them.

So such a tale I told them, long familiar to me; but as I told it the words seemed to sink and grow, so that I know not the sound of the old bear's voice, and they ran almost into rhyme and measured prose to tell it; and when I had done there was silence awhile, till one man spoke, but not loudly, "Yes, in that land was the summer short and the snows blew so much as they would in this same year now." "Yes," said a third, "hearken a story of Robus Hood; and 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 is an incomplete and defaced form you have read perhaps. My heart rose high as he sang and I felt the life of man rather than the existence of nature.

The trade all listened eagerly, and at times took up as a refrain a couplet at the end of a stanza with their strong and rough, but mellow voices; and as it was a picture of the wild woods passed by me, as they were indeed, and no perchkins dauntles gleaning and lawn

And as we went up and down the road, and the fair met us on the other side, and all went gravely and quietly into the village street and the fair sunlight of the sunny afternoon, wending its way into evening.

None had a thing to say, but first heard the new song singing out that as we went out of the door the ball-singer clapped me on the shoulder and said: "Was it not sweet then I said, brother, that Robus Hood shall be sung as old Blll?"

The street was pretty full of man by then we were out in it, and all faces turned toward the cross. The song still grew nearer and louder and then we saw it turning the corner through the hedges of the orchards and closes; a good clump of men, more aroused, as it would seem, than our villagers, as the low flashed back a shadow 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 binding all my mind to discuss, more words from the music, suddenly from the new white tower behind us clanged out the church bells like and hurled at first, but presently falling into measured chords and at the first sound of them a great shout went up from us and was echoed by the new bells, "John Ball hath ran one bell!" Then we pressed on, and presently we were all mingled together at the cross.

We had had naturally a thorough and pulled me forward, so that I found myself standing on this lowest step of the cross, his several two inches of man on one side of me. He chuckled while I parked, and said; "There's for thee a good heating and seeing staid, old lad. Then comes the bell, and not the bell, but the word, none is none of the best, and but for me thou wouldst have been amiss the tidings of the throng and have heard words muffled by Kenneth bellies and a little hissing of the iron, and the dusty splats like a crack over Leon no more on the ground, as though these saws a bare, but all the eyes and thine ears be busy to gather tidings to bear back to England.

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 excitement among the throng mingled the regular coughing of the bells, which now seemed far away as it was that they were not swayed by hands, but were living creatures making that noise of this will.

I looked around and saw that the new runners mingled with us must have a regular armed band; all had bucklers slung at their backs, for a sword and a shield on the side. Some had bows, some "staves"—that is, bills, pole-axes, or pikes. About us, all around us, they villagers, they had defensive arms. Most had steel-caps on their heads, and some body armour; generally a "leat" or coat into which pieces of our terms and judged ready and left. Some had silver and some had tin.

There were a few mounted men among them, their arms being big-boned hammer-headed heads, that looked as if they were of steel as from long lying, and some who were arm to arm 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, and his horse was shot and his with him, and he left his armor with his helmet.

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 strong and stood on the first step of the cross beside me. A man followed him, clad in a long day gown of green woollen, girt with a cord, to which hung a "pair of bands" (or rosary, as we should call it to-day) and a book in a bag. The man was tall and big-boned, ruddy gawky hair surrounded his pristine breast; his nose was big but clear cut and with wide shape, and his cheeks turned up with a red lip and a big but not blust skin; his mouth was big and the lips closed firmly; a face not very noteworthy but for his grey eyes opened wide apart, his eyes lighting up, as it were, 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 worst of eyes of the good and orthodox.

He went up the steps of the cross and stood at the top with one hand laid on the staff, and shout upon shouts broke forth from the throng. When the shouting died away into a 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 approach, swarmed round, and on the cross. What was the man standing still for a little, saying the strong, or rather looking first at one and then another man in it, as though he were trying to think that such one was thinking of, or what he was fit for. Sometimes he caught the eye of one or other, and then kindly smile spread over his face, but faded off into the sternness and sadness of a man who has heavy and great thoughts haring 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 stairs, and so presently the voice of the balls fell dead, leaving on us the sense of blankness or even disappointment which is always caused by the sudden stopping of a sound once has got used to and found pleasant. But a great satisfaction had fallen on me that the strong, and so was spoken even in a whisper, and all men's hearts and eyes were 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 his breast. And for me, as I read ready to hearken, I felt a joy in my soul that I had never yet felt.

WILLIAM MORRIS.

(Dto be continued.)

"DIVES AND HIS DINNERS."

The Pull Mall Gazette of November 10 contains the following suggestive letter from the Rev. G. S. Heaney.

"Rev. The Lord Mayor's banquet, you know, cost £3000. What could be done with that down east? This a good dinner of beef and mutton and coffee for 300,000 men, or a meal for 1000 men daily for seven months, or a menu once every day for 1000 children for seven months. This is not fiction, but fact, as we have given 100 men a good dinner for 2s. 6d., and a dinner for 100 children for less than half. Dives ought to be more than satisfied with his Guildhall dinner.

Assent the same subject a correspondent sends the following grim suggestion for the next 9th of November, if unhappy the miserable make bread and fear the poor, as it has resolved:

"I would suggest to the city magnates that as they parade their fine clothes, their sabres and their emblems, before the swelling multitudes to make it understand the difference between the clothing of the rich and the poor, as they might further heighten the contrast by having a number of men appointed to carry the smoking toasts of turtle soup in their procession, in portable birds might be arranged, whilst before the long hot summer, the pieces of fried beef could be cooked as the mayor moves on to Westminster, so all the people might get an inexpensive dinner in the long hot summer, as they passed by. Of course this would be a good idea, and give a good deal of employment, not only in carrying the wines, but in providing the off 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 produce of his own labour or not? If so, will they tell us why one should be compelled to give any portion of the produce of his labour to any one for an expenditure of his own?