A DREAM OF JOHN BALL.

(Continued from p. 291.)

So now I heard John Ball; how he lifted up his voice and said:

"Ye, all ye good people! I am a priest of God, and in my day's work it cometh that I should tell you what ye should do, and what ye should forbear doing, and to that end I am come hither; yet first if I myself have wronged any man here, let him say wherein my wrongdoing lieth, that I may ask his pardon and his pity.

A great hum of good-will ran through the crowd as he spoke; then hushed as in a kind of pride, and again he spoke: 'Wherefore did ye take me out of the archbishop's prison, but three days since, when ye lighted the archbishop's house for the candle of Canterbury, but that I might speak to you and pray you: therefore I will not keep silence whether I have done ill or whether I have done well. And herein, good fellows, and my very brethren, I would have you to follow me; and if there be such here, as I know there be, some men may be the good many, who have been robbers of the poor, and who is my neighbour? Quoth the rich man, or leeches, or despitem, haters, or talebearers, or fawners on rich men for the hurt of the poor (and that is the worst of all)—Ah, my poor brethren who have gone astray, I say not to you, go home and repent lest you mar our great deeds, but rather come and fail here and there. Many a day have ye been fools, but hearken unto me and I shall make you wise above the wisdom of the earth: and if ye die in your wisdom, as God wot ye will dies, since the fields ye lend to beard不可 spared for hunger, then shall ye be, though man call ye dead, a part and parcel of the living wisdom of all things, very stones of the pillars that uphold the joyful earth.

"Forsyth, ye have heard it said that ye shall do well in this world that in the world to come ye may live happily ever after; ye do well then, and have your reward both on earth and in heaven; for I say to you that earth is not made for ye and heaven is not made for ye; and this one is that which ye know, and are each one of you a part of, ye, the Holy Church, and each one of you dwelleth the life of the church, unless ye slay it. Forsyth, brethren, will ye murder the church any one of you, and go forth a wandering man and lonely and as Cain did who will, for his face was stolid and unmoved all the time, till he caught my eye, and then he screwed up the strangest face of crowing bow, weeping eyes, and smiling mouth, while he dealt me a sound thump in the ribs with his left elbow, which, though it would have knocked me down but for the crowd, I took as an esquire does the accolade which makes a knight of him.

But while I pondered all these things, and how men fight and lose the battle, and the thing that they fought for comes about in spite of their defeat, and when it comes turns out to be what they meant, and other men have to fight for what they meant under another name—while I pondered all this, John Ball began to speak again in the same soft and clear voice with which he had left off.

"Good fellows, was your fellowship and your kindness that took me out of the archbishop's prison three days ago, though God wot ye had sought to gain by it save outlawry and the gallowst, yet lacked I not your fellowship before ye drew near me in this body, and between me and Canterbury street was yet a stone wall, and the turnkeys and sergeants and bailiffs. For hearken, my friends and helpers, many days ago, I was young, I lay there, and the heart that I had lived to bear all things because of the fellowship of men and the blessed saints and the angels that are and those that are to be, this heart that I had beaten up and gone into foolishness, so that I lay there along with the green fields and the white-thorn bushes and the lark singing over the corn, and the talk of good fellows round the ale house bench, and the babble of the little children, and the team on the road, and the beasts in their fold, and all that, and me all along the whole, near my foes and far from my friends, mocked and flouted and cuffed and cold and hunger; and so was my heart that I longed for all these things, yet I saw them not, nor knew them as names, and I longed so sore to be gone that I chided myself that I had once done well, and I told to myself: "Forsyth, hast thou kept thy tongue between thy teeth about nothing being said, if it had been but a parson of a town, and comfortable to many a poor man, and then mightest thou have had all the naked back, and filled the empty belly, and holpen many, and men would have spoke well of thee, and of thyself thou hast thought well, and all this hast thou lost for lack of a word here and there to some great man, and little winking of the eyes amidst murder and wrong and unright, and now thou art nought and helpless, and the hemp for thee is sown and grown and heaved and spun, and lo, there the rope for thy gallowst!—all for nought, Forsyth, my friends, thus I thought and sorrowed in my foolishness that I had not been a traitor to the fellowship of the church, for even so evil was my foolish imagination. Yet, forsyth, as I fell apondering over all this comfort and help that I might have been and that I might have had if I been but a little of a troubling bird to creep and crawl before abbot and bishop and baron and bailiff, came the thought over me of the evil of the world wherewith I, John Ball, the scurvy hedge-pig, had fought and striven in the fellowship of saints in heaven and poor men upon earth. Yes, forsyth, once again I saw as of old, the great treading down the little, and the strong beating down the weak, and cruel men fearing not, and kind men daring not, and wise men caring not; and the saints in heaven forbearing and yet binding me not to forbear; forsyth, I knew once more that he who doeth well in fellowship, and because of fellowship, shall not fail in heaven.
THE IMPRACTICABILITY OF THE PRESS.

Socialists are frequently encountered with the assertion that their schemes are impracticable. The class of people who make this assertion foolishly suppose that they have a monopoly of practicality and there is none left for Socialists, perhaps it would be instructive to see how much of that quality they really possess. The opinions of this kind of folk are formed, and consequently represented by the daily press; and it is a daily paper to see what it can suggest to counteract the difficulties of our social system.

The Daily News of November 8, gives a graphic description of a common lodging-house in Lock's Fields, and the writer deplors the facilities for the poor, so poorly furnished and vacated by theS. I. S. who are reduced so low as to have to resort to such lodgings. The writer of the article betook himself to this lodging-house and paid for the best accommodation provided, and lay down in the corner of a large room, on the floor of which "boys and girls from 8 to 16," were leading the night amid the most filthy surroundings, to take meals. He does not appear to have stayed there long; he shortly had to beat a retreat, for a fight took place, and he deemed discretion the better part of valour and fled. In his flight he stumbled into another room where there was no light. However, the moon favoured him, and threw a light into this abode of vice and misery. On the floor of this room he saw "boys and girls from 8 to 16," with "misery, want, and absolute starvation imprinted upon nearly all the faces of them."

It is not the business of a descriptive writer on a newspaper staff to suggest remedies for the evils he depicts. He only details what he sees, interspersed occasionally by an exclamation of disgust or otherwise as befits the case. The writer of the article referred to adheres very closely to description, but he asks, "Can such a sight be possible in the year of our Lord, 1861?"

The Daily News, in addition to this descriptive article, devotes a leader to the subject and to the leader, naturally turns to see what practicable remedies may be suggested for such a barbarous state of things; but there is no suggestion of any kind. It gives vent to a burst or two of disgust, and refers to "good old Hogarth's time, when it was Gin Court, now it is Lock's Fields." "That is about all the difference," and goes on. "This note of everlastingness in it is the truly soothing thought." The language has yet to be invented in which I could express my contempt for the man that could pen such a sentence. Perhaps the exigencies of maintaining a large and increasing circulation demands such an expression.

The closing sentence of the leader is as follows: "One day, perhaps, the true deliverer will come, some man who will know how to make us truly feel for one another, and grow sick and ashamed of most of the vanities of art, science, and literature, as well as of the luxury

(To be continued.)

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