

themselves upon it and set to work to stake the road across the rough

What befell 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 bowmen, 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 lengthen the line in case they should try to break in on our flank. The hedge in front of us was of quick. It had been strongly plashed in the past February, and was stiff and stout. It stood on a low bank; and besides the level of the orchard was some thirty inches higher than that of the field, and the ditch was some two foot deeper than the face of the field. The field went winding round to beyond the church, making a quarter of a circle about the village, and at the western end of it were the butts whence the folk were coming from shooting when I first came into the village street. Altogether, to me who knew 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, it 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" building-society, bank depositing, shopocracy and petty bourgeois, to whom he has now rattled, 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. If Socialists were at all likely to be discouraged, 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 Socialistic opinion in the following very unorthodox sentiments, 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 demoralised as the indolent younger son who has been at Eton and cannot imagine why he should ever be doing any harder work than is demanded from a decorative private secretary. The street cadgers are not morally one whit worse than this desultory young gentleman, and as long as we cannot help supporting them they will go on begging."

Again:

"We cannot do this, and we cannot do that," people cry, because it is 'economically unsound.' But this is no reason for never doing anything at all. If nearly everything that is proposed be economically unsound, what is left that is economically sound? Is it to extort the utmost possible percentage out of work paid for at wages which must be eked out by prostitution, theft, and beggary? If that kind of economy be sound economically, it is rotten every other way. One might feel it a relief to do something positive that was wrong, rather than to sit still for ever doing nothing in the odour of economical sanctity. It is not institutions, enactments, and

At length we've eyes that see;
At last our time to speak has come
And men we claim to be;
What care we for your prate and fuss
Of who are out or in,
Unless your ruling give to us
The lives we mean to win?
The rags—the hunger of the past
No longer must endure;
The People throned in power at last
Will see there are no poor.

W. C. BENNETT.

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 Socialist. The history of the Commune, as presented in the generally unbiassed narrative of Lissagary, bears a profound moral with it. It is the story of the struggle of noble enthusiasm, genuine disinterestedness and devotion, and, in the ordinary sense, great opportunities, with foolish vanity, personal squabbles, inefficiency of organisation, and pedantry, resulting in the ascendancy of the latter, and consequent general collapse. The Versailles entered upon a victory 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 able to keep the whip-hand of mere confusion, cliquishness, and faddism. But the moral to be drawn is of more immediate application than to the next popular rising. To compare small matters with great, there are Socialist organisations (save the mark!) in existence to-day which are literally qualifying for disaster when the time comes. We 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 '71, the friend of the Cause feels inclined to wring his hands over the opportunities lost. Lost because everything was in confusion, nearly everybody was wanting to do everybody else's work, and consequently doing no work at all, and in 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 garrisoned; but there was no one there. Again, when the Commune was in death-throes, street after street was sacrificed because officers and others carrying important messages were stopped and forced to assist in the ordinary work of barricade making—the last defences being thus literally immolated before a false and idiotic notion of equality.

We wish that every true Socialist at heart whose head is 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 who can fairly be accused of sinister motives, or of attempts to make personal gain out of it—but because