

TRADES-UNIONISM IN ENGLAND.

THE social revolution which is in progress in every country of Europe has reached a point at which it is seriously alarming the upper classes. They are, no doubt, easily panic-stricken, but it is impossible to deny that they have good grounds in these days for anxiety. Occasional outbreaks of vivid flame—at Paris or Cartagena, in Russia or Ireland—come as warnings of what is smoldering everywhere below the surface of society, and not so very far below the surface. “Magnificence side by side with misery; altars blazing with jewels amidst homes unfit for human beings; luxury, enjoyment, and fine clothes, hustled by want, and care, and rags,” have been a common enough sight since man first gathered in great cities; but the contrast has probably never yet been so marked, or so vividly felt, as in these later days. The enormous strides which material civilization is making only add to the trouble. Steam, electricity, the cheap press, have been doing their leveling work throughout Christendom. By these and other means, the “party of discontent”—as that vast majority of every people which must live from hand to mouth has been somewhat unfairly called—has been educated, until its members are not only able to feel the misery and hopelessness of their own condition and prospects under the existing competitive organization of society, but to act with great and constantly increasing power for the overthrow or modification of that organization. It cannot be too clearly understood that the great unrest of our time, though taking different names,—coöperation, communism, socialism, nihilism,—and having different superficial characteristics in England, France, Germany, Russia, Italy, springs really from the same root, and looks to the same goal. That root is the hopelessness of the conditions of life for the great majority under the prevailing industrial and commercial systems, which tend more and more to the accumulation of all surplus wealth in the hands of one small class. That aim is so to alter the organization of society as to bring all this surplus wealth, and the enjoyment, leisure, culture which go with it, within reach of the excluded majority. And, widely as the methods differ by which this aim is sought to be attained in different countries, there is one characteristic which may be noted in all of them: association of one kind or another is the lever by which the “party

of discontent” are trying to move the world. They have learned practically the truth of the old fable of the bundle of sticks, and know by experience that unless united they are powerless. And so the free right of association has been the watch-word of the labor movement all over Europe; and it may be safely taken as a general rule that the danger to the upper classes and to existing institutions, or the revolution now in progress in each nation, varies in proportion as that right has been recognized.

It is this master fact which gives character and its deepest interest to the social revolution in the midst of which we are living, and which, but for the progress of association in many different forms, would present so dreary and menacing an outlook. But hope comes in through this window. The more carefully we watch the rise of the democratic tide, the more clearly does the Industrial Association stand out as the channel into which the waters of the flood may safely flow for the healing of the nations, and into which they will surely flow in increasing volume if allowed to follow their natural course. Whatever danger the advancing wave may seem to threaten to existing institutions, arises from attempts to block the channel.

The people's credit-banks of Schultze-De-litsch in Germany and Italy, and such associations as those established by M. M. Leclair and Godin in France, are at once the best answer to the alarms of the well-to-do classes, and the best antidote to the teachings of Karl Marx and the extreme Communists. And if the attempt to confiscate the possessions of the rich, and to make the State the sole proprietor of wealth and employer of labor, is to be averted, it will be by the multiplication and free growth of such institutions, the members of which will be found the most efficient champions of all the legitimate rights as well of property as of labor.

It is, then, by studying the position which association amongst the working class has attained in each country, that we can best judge not only of the condition of individuals of that class, but of the prospects of the nation to which they belong. In England, with which alone we are concerned here, the prospect is, on the whole, full of hope, for the right of association has been freely acknowledged by the legislature, and the law-abiding

temper of the people has led them to exercise that right freely without abusing it. How far this has been done already, and with what results, we will endeavor to show so far as our limits will allow.

Before coming to the associations to which our attention must be mainly directed, namely, the trades-unions and coöperative societies,—the proper outgrowth of the new revolutionary era,—we must look for a moment at the root out of which these later organizations have sprung. This is the ordinary Friendly Society, which has been the school in which the English working class has been learning self-government for generations in a quiet, plodding, humdrum, and (till recently) shiftless fashion. There is scarcely a hamlet in which the Friendly Society has not struck root, generally in the first instance, in the form of a small local society living from hand to mouth, and too often expiring periodically in consequence of the inadequacy of the contributions to insure the promised benefits, or of the unwillingness of young men to join, or of the constant temptation to divide the accumulated fund.

Of late years, however, friendly societies have assumed a new and more permanent and healthy form. The tendency to federation has done its work in one direction, and the constant pressure from the Registrar in another. The scattered clubs and lodges have been grouped in county societies, or have been affiliated to one of the great orders of Odd-Fellows, Foresters, or Druids. These orders, to their great credit, and at much expense, have submitted the whole of their rates of contributions and payments—their incomings and outgoings—to actuaries named or approved by the Registrar, and have adopted tables thus certified as sufficient to secure the payment of all sums insured. So that this great effort of the English poor for self-help by mutual insurance may be looked on as sound, and likely to hold its own for the present, even though it may be gradually superseded by and absorbed in other forms of association more suited to the conditions and requirements of the new time. The returns of the Registrar show that in 1880 the number of members in England and Wales of friendly societies making returns was 4,650,754, and that their accumulated funds stood at £12,741,191. In Scotland and Ireland, where the Friendly Society has struck much less firm root, the number of members scarcely exceeds 600,000, and the accumulated funds £800,000.

It is in this school, then, that the English working class has been trained, and has learned that habit of combination which is so

rapidly changing the political and social outlook, and stands out as the most serious problem with which statesmen and politicians have to reckon. The old Friendly Society accepted the order of things which it found in existence. It said to the poor man: "You are liable to sickness and accident; you must get old, you must die; against all these ills to which flesh is heir you ought to make the best provision you can, and this method of mutual insurance which we offer is the best open to you." The new forms of combination to which we must now turn, though no doubt the legitimate offspring of the old Friendly Society, take very different ground. So far from accepting the established order, they are in direct protest against it. They may be divided into two great groups, the trades-unions and the coöperative societies. The former occupy, indeed, the old ground of the ordinary Friendly Society, that of mutual insurance; but they do not stop where the Friendly Society stopped; their main object being, so far as insurance is concerned, not to provide payments and allowances to the sick, or the aged, or the families of deceased members, but to maintain those of their body who are out of work, and by this means to bring pressure to bear on employers for the regulation of wages and of the arrangement and management of factories and workshops. It is this weapon which has enabled them to fight the battle of labor, and to win the position they now hold, which friend and foe alike admit to be one of very great and constantly increasing influence.

Trades-unionism, in its present highly organized form, is the product of the last thirty years. Up to 1849–50 there was scarcely any coherence between societies in the same trade. They had ceased to be absolutely illegal since the repeal of the Combination Laws in 1825, but remained outside the protection of the law as regarded their funds, and were scattered up and down the country, each holding its own as well as it could in its own locality. In these years the first steps toward federation were taken, the engineers and machinists being the leaders in the movement. Their efforts were successful, and their union, known as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, had scarcely been organized a year before they were in collision with their employers on the vexed questions, over-time and piece-work. The men had old standing grievances on both subjects, and were eager to test the power of their new organization (which seemed to them irresistible) to give them a voice in settling such questions. But the battle-ground was not judiciously chosen, and the army was not disciplined. The re-

sult was a serious defeat. After a lock-out of four months, and the expenditure of the whole of the accumulated funds of the Amalgamated Society, the employers opened their works again, and the men went back on the old terms. Had the Amalgamated Society broken up, as was confidently expected at the time, the labor movement might have been thrown back for a quarter of a century, and the danger was great. A considerable minority of the members were thoroughly beaten and discouraged. The policy of amalgamation was seriously attacked by the employers for the moment, united under the pressure of a new danger, and but for the ability and firmness of purpose of the officers and council, the federation might have dissolved. As it was, the defeat proved better than a victory. It was the turning-point in the history of the Amalgamated Society, which rapidly recovered its losses, and at the end of two years was stronger than ever. From that time it has steadily increased, until it numbers upward of forty-five thousand members, and has branches in all the great colonies and in the United States. It has never had a second pitched battle with the employers, but has to be reckoned with on all questions affecting production and the conditions of labor. The example of the engineers was soon followed by the other leading industries, and the scattered societies of carpenters and joiners, iron-workers, miners, masons, printers, tailors, shoemakers, and, lastly, agricultural laborers and railway servants, went into union with more or less success. In most cases, the precedent of 1851 was followed only too faithfully; and one after another of the amalgamated societies, in the early days of their union, tried their strength against their employers in strikes or lock-outs, which spread through large districts and disturbed great industries. The conflict had clearly entered on a new phase. The press echoed the alarm of the employers, and denounced these combinations in unmeasured terms. The trade of the country would be ruined by these great unions of the working classes, controlled by irresponsible councils whose authority was blindly obeyed, and which were composed of men whose profession was agitation, and whose living depended upon fostering disputes. Capital, withdrawn from production at home, would seek other countries where employers could do what they pleased with their own, free from all interference. The fears of society were tersely and forcibly summed up by the present Lord Sherbrooke in one of his House of Commons speeches against the Reform Bill of Lord Russell's government, in 1866, when he urged that the same machinery which was

already brought into play in connection with strikes would be applied by the working classes to political purposes. "Once give the men votes, and that machinery is ready to launch those votes in one compact mass on the institutions and property of the country." Notwithstanding these protests, in the next year the act was passed by a Tory government which gave almost every trades-unionist in the kingdom a vote. A dissolution followed, but "the institutions and property of the country" remained unassailed. In the new Parliament, notwithstanding the vast increase of the electorate, there was no direct representation of the unions; but their growing influence had made itself felt in the most legitimate manner. Legislation on the labor question became an imperative necessity. Upon the report of a royal commission, which sat for eighteen months and instituted the most searching inquiries into the action of the unions throughout the kingdom, an act was passed which gave them a definite legal position. A second commission sat in 1874, mainly for the purpose of dealing with the law of conspiracy as applicable to combinations of workmen, which still bore unfairly (so the unions contended) on their organizations. This question was also dealt with in the next session of Parliament; and, although the unions failed to obtain the entire exemption which they claimed, the terms of the settlement were such as to satisfy all but extreme partisans. They are now distinctly recognized as legal bodies, and can, if they please, register under the Friendly Societies acts, and obtain protection for their funds and the right of prosecuting and defending actions in their corporate capacity.

Their progress outside Parliament has been equally remarkable. Its most noteworthy feature has been the institution of yearly congresses, to which every trades-union in the kingdom is free to send delegates, and at which all questions bearing on the condition of labor are discussed from the workman's point of view.

The first of these was held in 1867, when the appointment of the Royal Commission, and the pending inquiry, brought home to their leaders the necessity for a closer alliance and united action. These congresses have been held annually ever since, and year by year have grown in numbers, and have shown greater capacity for dealing with public questions. At first they were employed upon the amendments in the law directly affecting themselves; but, as these have been settled, the scope of their action has steadily widened; and, though still nominally abstaining from all party politics, they consider, discuss, and endeavor to influence legislation on all

questions directly or remotely bearing on the interests of labor. This congress is represented by a Parliamentary committee elected at the yearly meetings, but sitting permanently, whose duty it is to watch legislation and the action of the Government, to keep in communication with and advise the unions, and in case of need to summon delegates or act in the name of the united body. The position which the united trades have thus won for themselves will be best appreciated by looking in some detail at the proceedings of the Congress which was held in London during the week commencing on the 12th of September, 1881.

The number of delegates was 157, representing 122 societies and trade councils, with an aggregate membership of 463,899, a considerable advance on any previous congress. It is not, however, on this account that any special interest attaches to the congress of 1881. A steady increase in the numbers of the societies in union may be looked for year by year, the attraction of the union having become too strong to be resisted by smaller bodies, now that all the amalgamated societies have given in their adhesion. But no previous congress has obtained the same recognition either in the press or from the constituted authorities; nor has any one had to deal with questions so delicate and difficult as were solved successfully by the assembled delegates in September, 1881.

As regards recognition, the associated trades-unionists have at last been formally acknowledged as the representatives of the skilled labor of the United Kingdom.

In former years the congress has been looked upon, as a rule, with no friendly eye by mayors and corporations. Nor can this be wondered at, seeing that municipal government in England remains still almost exclusively in the hands of employers of labor. There are probably not a dozen corporations in the United Kingdom which number a workingman amongst their members; and in London, where the corporation has been strong enough to resist reform, none but a wealthy man can hope to become even a Common Councilman, much less to don the furred gown of an alderman, and so to become entitled in his turn to fill the civic chair, and to taste for twelve months the sweets of being a lord and a privy councillor. It results, as a natural consequence of this plutocratic constitution, that in no town in the kingdom is class prejudice, and the stolid power of resistance to new ideas, more ripe than in the metropolis.

It may be looked on, therefore, as a significant sign of the times that the late Lord

Mayor should have invited the delegates of the Trades-Union Congress to an entertainment at the Mansion House, and the proceedings in the Egyptian Hall on that evening are not a little curious to students of the labor question. The chief magistrate of the greatest commercial and manufacturing city in the world welcomed the delegates as the rank and file of the great industries of the country. He went on to say that he looked on it as an important part of his duty to recognize the position they held in relation to the trade of England, and hoped his invitation might convince them of his desire to see strengthened the bonds which should unite employer and employed. In reading the reports of their proceedings during the week, he learned that the business which called them annually together was that they might act as interpreters of the wishes and aspirations of the industrial classes whom they represented, and serve as a conductor between the legislature and the working masses of whose peculiar wrongs and grievances legislators might be ignorant, so that all unequal laws affecting the interests of labor might be removed by legal means. Such demands were only fair and reasonable, and every statesman admitted their claim to equal laws to be for the interest of the whole nation. He was glad to admit that their work had not only benefited trades-unions, but the whole of the working class. The work of our miners, seamen, factory workers, had been made safer and more tolerable by recent acts of Parliament, some of which had been initiated and all supported by them. In reviewing the past, they had every reason to be satisfied with their history and success. They had proved to the working people of the United Kingdom that, with justice on their side and judicious counselors at their back, all wrongs could be righted by the use of moderation and patient but persistent labor. This would apply not only to legislation, but to the relations between capital and labor, which should be of the most intimate kind; and he looked forward to the improvement of those relations in the interests of trade, and therefore of the nation. And then, after congratulating them on the conduct of their secretary, Mr. Broadhurst, as their representative in the House of Commons, where he had discharged his duties with an ability and faithfulness which had earned the respect and esteem of all parties, his lordship concluded by saying that he had had during his mayoralty to receive the representatives of all classes of the community, but that there were none whom he had been more glad to welcome than his guests of the evening.

To whom replied, shortly and gravely, Mr. Coulson, delegate from the Bricklayers' Union and president of the congress, thanking the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress for their hospitality, and hoping that their deliberations as trades-unionists might benefit not only their own order, but the whole nation. The president was followed by Mr. Broadhurst, M. P., secretary of the Parliamentary Committee, and delegate of the Masons' Operative Society of England and Wales, who ventured to congratulate the Lord Mayor on his recognition of the value of trades-unions as initiators of legislation, and on the example he was setting to the chief magistrates of other great towns, from whom the congress had received scant courtesy, and who, if they would inquire for themselves, instead of accepting second-hand evidence, would find that trades-unionists, while determined to have their rights, were never unreasonable or desirous of infringing on the rights of others. Such, in condensed form, was what passed on this occasion, surely as noteworthy a one as any royal, military, or other reception which has taken place in that center of civic magnificence for many years.

But the action taken by the assembled delegates, in a matter vitally affecting the constitution and character of their organization, gives a yet more special significance to the Congress of 1881.

The necessity for such action arose as follows: The depression of all branches of industry in the last few years had revived the hopes of those who have never frankly accepted free-trade principles. This party, though not numerous, as the result has proved, are rich and energetic, and spared neither expense nor trouble in using the bad times for their own purposes. It would have been useless to attack in front under the banner of "Protection to native industry," as in England no public men with characters to lose could have been found to lead such a forlorn hope. But a flank movement, it seemed, might have some chance of success; so the plausible cry for "fair trade" was raised, and an association formed to promote the new policy and press it on candidates and constituencies. A certain amount of success, more superficial than real, rewarded these efforts. The "fair trade" cry was raised at several by-elections, and the refusal to treat the question as one of practical politics was supposed to have injured more than one candidate. Here and there, too, there were signs that the work-people in the depressed trades were inclined to listen to the voice of the protectionist charmer; or, at any rate, so said persons who assumed to speak for them. The theory that those who

are combined to keep up wages and improve the conditions of labor cannot be genuine free-traders was maintained with much plausible reasoning in middle-class newspapers. In fact, the time seemed ripe for an effort to bring the trades-unions into the Fair-Trade camp; and the association saw the opportunity for making it at the yearly congress, and set about the business with considerable skill.

The congress was called for Monday the 11th of September; so a Fair-Trade conference was announced for the Friday and Saturday of the previous week. To this conference certain trades-unionists from Bristol, Glasgow, Birmingham, and other towns, were invited, who were known as fair-traders, the association agreeing to pay their expenses to London and give them 15s. a day, upon condition that they should afterward attend the Trades-Union Congress, and should raise there the question of foreign export bounties, and otherwise promote the Fair-Trade cause. The persons so invited accordingly offered their gratuitous services to the trades-unions or trades councils to which they belonged; and several of those bodies, in their anxiety to save expense, fell into the trap, and appointed them as delegates to the congress. In other cases, the appointments were not formally made; but the usual credentials were given by the secretary or other officer of the society, on his own authority.

A compact body of Fair-Traders was thus introduced into the Trades-Union Congress. The attempt to use their organization for party purposes had been made before, but never with such ingenuity, nor on so large a scale. Rumors of what had been done were rife, and it was felt that the matter was of grave importance and must be promptly dealt with, and it was referred to the Standing Orders Committee to report upon. The rule had always been that delegates should be formally elected, and their expenses paid by the societies which sent them, but this rule had not been strictly enforced. A note from the secretary of a society naming a delegate had been allowed to pass as sufficient credentials, and the inquiry as to the payment of expenses had been somewhat lax. The Standing Orders Committee, after careful inquiry, on the second day advised Congress to declare that no one should be eligible as a delegate whose expenses were not borne by the society sending him. This was passed at once by a large majority; and on the third day the committee presented their report, recommending that, in future, all delegates' credentials should be signed by at least two officers of the appointing society, and instancing by name several persons who had failed to es-

establish their right to sit in the present Congress, their expenses not having been paid by the societies they professed to represent.

Upon this report the question of the expulsion of the named delegates was raised in the most direct manner, in spite of the doubts and warnings of not a few timid or over-cautious persons, who feared that such a course might lead to serious trouble, possibly to the break-up of the Union. Were not the Fair-Traders a strong body, with much to say for their views? Could the congress risk drawing the reins so tightly, after having been lax for so many years? The rumor of their divisions had already leaked out; would not a public struggle over the expulsion of these men rejoice all their enemies and create a scandal of the most serious character? Timid counsels, however, did not prevail, and half measures were put resolutely aside. The case of each named delegate was brought up in turn, and a motion made that he be not allowed to sit in this congress. In each case the delegate himself and his friends were heard; and in every case, the facts found by the Standing Orders Committee remaining unshaken, the motion was carried by heavy majorities. This action was confirmed by resolutions framed with a view to guard all future congresses against outside influences. Contrary to expectation, there has been no secession, or even protest, from any society belonging to the organization. The tone of a special report recently issued by the Parliamentary Committee shows how serious the danger had been in the opinion of those most competent to judge. A glance at the subjects which were brought before the congress will show how rapidly the ideas of trades-unionists are growing as to what are "working-class questions." Thus the report and resolutions of the Congress of 1881 deal not only with proposed legislation on the inspection of factories and workshops, the liability of employers for accidents, and the hours of labor, but with the extension of the suffrage, the patent laws, the codification of the criminal law, the land laws, national defense, imprisonment for debt, labor representation in Parliament, and foreign export bounties. Here, then, we get the best evidence that the old line of abstention from politics has been abandoned. Indeed, in his opening address, the chairman formally noted this change. "Two things," he says, "are quite clear: first, that, while we do well to avoid party politics, and to guard ourselves carefully against party influences, especially such as come from the ruling classes, at the same time the hard and fast line we endeavored formally to draw between political and trade questions has been broken

down, and cannot be maintained; and, secondly, that we cannot stand aloof from the interests of our brethren of other countries." And again: "There should be the firmest alliance between the workmen of different countries, for their enemies are the same, and union is strength between workmen of different countries as between workmen of different trades. . . . We are engaged in the same great struggle for our full share in the social and political life of our time."

In short, the first part of Lord Sherbrooke's sinister prophecy has come true; and "the same machinery which is brought into play in connection with strikes is being applied to political purposes." It remains to be seen whether, now that their position is assured and their aims are defined, the second part of that prophecy will also be fulfilled,—whether the machinery of the unions will be "launched in one compact mass on the institutions and property of the country." It is useless to deny that the problem is an awkward one, in England as elsewhere. "Given the condition," as Lord Derby has put it, "that nearly all political power is virtually in one class,—as under our system of household suffrage it is, whenever that class chooses to take it,—and that nearly all surplus wealth which men desire is in the hands of another class, how long will you be able to prevent an explosion?" Let us look it in the face so far as the trades-unions are concerned, endeavoring fairly to measure what they have done already, and to infer, so far as materials serve, what may be expected of them in the future:

First, as to trades' disputes. It was confidently expected that these would grow in numbers and intensity as the unions spread over larger areas and perfected their organization; and at one time the expectation seemed likely to be fulfilled. We have already noted that one after another of the trades, as their societies were amalgamated, followed the example of the engineers, and tried a fall with their employers. But of late years, the number of these great strikes has notably diminished; and every year the chances of such lamentable contests seem likely to decrease. For in many of the great staple industries, permanent courts of arbitration and conciliation have been formed, composed of employers and workmen in equal numbers, before which all disputes are brought in the first instance. The decisions of these tribunals are not, indeed, absolutely binding; but as a rule, they have been accepted, and loyally acted upon by both sides. The example has spread in trades where no such courts have been established, so that, when a dispute arises, there is almost always an effort, and generally

a successful one, to refer the matter in dispute to arbitration. Moreover, several of the most powerful unions in the kingdom have made a rule, that in no case shall aid be given to any local branch engaged in a strike, unless it can be proved that, before going out, a *bona fide* offer of arbitration has been made to the employer. It is beyond question that this remarkable change has been effected in consequence and not in spite of the more perfect organization of the societies and the establishment of the union represented by the annual congress and the Parliamentary Committee. And this has been the work of the leaders,—partisans no doubt, or they would never have been elected; but men who have as a rule signally disproved the accusations so persistently made against them as “paid agitators.” “Paid” they are, no doubt; but there is not one of the secretaries who draws the salary of a good clerk; and the allowances to committeemen for attendances scarcely cover necessary expenses. “Agitators” they are, too, in a sense, as it is their special function to watch and protect the interests of their members, which involves frequent controversies with employers and appeals to their own members. But the serious responsibility which is thrown on them has had, in the vast majority of cases, the effect of sobering and steadying even extreme partisans; and it may be safely affirmed that, in nine cases out of ten, strikes are most rare in the best organized trades, and that the central council is far more cautious and peaceably inclined than local councils, and local councils than the workmen in any given establishment. So far, then, the increase in power of the unions has made their action less aggressive. There seems at present no reason to doubt that this will continue to be the case.

Secondly, as to wages. Whether the action of the trades-unions has had any effect in raising these is a question still warmly disputed. The orthodox economists have maintained, and have apparently persuaded the general public, that it is impossible. Nevertheless, whether it be *post hoc* or *propter hoc*, the fact remains that in England the standard of wages has gone up in all trades of late years, and to that extent the employers’ share in profits has been reduced, and that of their workmen increased. The struggle for a greater share of these profits is, of course, one of the main objects of the unions, and brings them into direct antagonism with employers; but it is satisfactory, at any rate, to note that much of the old blindness and bitterness has disappeared. The voluntary courts of arbitration and conciliation may be credited with this result. In them, the union representatives

get a real knowledge of the difficulties and fluctuations of trade, and come into personal relations with employers, by which both sides learn to make allowances. Disputes as to the rate of wages can never cease until the development of association has made the interests of employer and employed identical. When that time comes, trades-unions will disappear. Meantime, they have done this signal service, that the conflict is now, on the workman’s side, maintained by an organized force and not by bands of guerrillas.

Thirdly, as to the quality and quantity of work. Complaints on these points have become general of late, and the deterioration has been generally attributed to the influence of the unions. It is said that they are the cause that less work is done in a given time than formerly; that the work that is done is of inferior quality; that the best workmen are brought down by their rules to an equality with the worst, and that both are demoralized. There is some truth in these complaints, as the unions themselves admit in the defense which they put forth in their report for 1881. It runs:

“We fear that this (speculative building) is not the only branch of the trade of the country in which durability has been sacrificed to cheapness. This scamping of work and cheating of purchasers is not the fault of the artisan; it is his misfortune. We know by experience that the properly trained and highly skilled workman is the first to suffer. When circumstances press him into this circle of competition, he has to undergo a second apprenticeship to acquire this sleight-of-hand system. During this period he earns less than the initiated; and when good fortune brings him back to his original class of work, he has again the labor, however short, of renewing his former habits. We could wish to see the end of this spurious class of work, but the prospect of such a desirable change is not immediate. There are employers who would not hesitate to destroy the reputation of a trade, or, for that matter, of a nation, for the sake of rapid and increased profits, and then charge the wrong upon those whom they have demoralized in their demand for cheap production.”

It is a melancholy “confession and avoidance.” The employers must, no doubt, share the blame with their workmen; but these cannot shift it from their own shoulders. They are powerful enough now to insist, if they choose to do so, that no unionist shall work in shops where such practices prevail. Moreover, much of the scamping and dawdling complained of is that of men in establishments of good repute, where the employers desire that the work should be done in the best manner and the shortest time. That the unions have not made common cause with such employers in the past is a weak point in their case. It may fairly be hoped that the renewed interest in thoroughly good work of all kinds may influence these powerful bodies.

The fact that they denounce scamping as "a crime" in a recent report is a good sign; but if their action stops there, it will be of little use. What is wanted is that the prejudice against manual labor, which has undoubtedly grown of late among our artisans, should be rooted out, and the pride in fine work encouraged; and that not only "scamping," but wasting time which is paid for, should be marked as disgraceful by the public opinion of the handicraftsmen of England. The trades-unions could effect this if they set about it in earnest, and at present they are probably the only agency through which it could be effected.

Fourthly, the moderation with which the political power of the unions has been used hitherto, is best illustrated by the fact that it is only recently that any public officer has been appointed on their application. In the spring of 1881 the Parliamentary Committee waited on the Home Secretary to suggest that inspectorships under the Factory and Workshops acts were posts which skilled workmen were well qualified to fill. Sir William Harcourt at once met them half-way, and offered the first vacancy in his gift to Mr. Broadhurst, their secretary and M. P. for Stoke-on-Trent. On his declining, Mr. J. D. Prior, the secretary to the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, accepted the post, for which no one doubts his entire fitness. In fifteen years, one sub-inspectorship of factories stands out as the result of the attacks of the unions on the institutions of the country, though it must be admitted that they look forward to "a larger share in the civil administration, which will assuredly fall to the lot of those who succeed us, even should we not live to see it." In such modest phrase they celebrate the first appointment of one of their number to a humble post in the civil service. On the other hand, they have managed to send two representatives to the House of Commons,—Mr. Burt, president of the Miners' National Union, and Mr. Broadhurst, secretary of the Parliamentary Committee,—both of whom, by their moderation and good sense, by their firmness in present-

ing the views of their own class and their readiness to consider those of opponents, have won the respect of the House and the country.

So far, then, the institutions or property of the country have no reason to distrust the growing power of the trades-unions. The social democracy of England, as represented by them,—and, to a considerable extent, they are its genuine representatives,—although solicited again and again by zealous propagandists from the Continent, have steadily refused to adopt the ideas of German State Socialists or French Communists. They have made no claim that the State shall interfere with private property, or with the organization of labor. They do not ask that it shall become the sole owner of land, the sole capitalist, the universal employer. They believe that the claims of labor can be fairly met, and the condition of the working classes made what it ought to be, by the working out of the traditional policy of trades-unionism on the old lines.

But is it possible for those who are not trades-unionists to share this belief? Surely not. The fact is, that they do not even pretend to solve the great industrial problem. As long as the present system lasts, employers and workmen must remain rivals; and so long it is well that each side should be thoroughly organized, as thereby the chances of open collision are minimized, and when a battle does come the laws of war are better observed. The unions, it is true, encourage arbitration; but even if arbitration were universally to prevail, the antagonism would be only dormant, not extinguished. At best, it can only result in establishing a temporary truce on reasonable terms, when disarmament and final peace is what is needed. And this is the truth which has been firmly grasped by the Coöperators, who form the other great branch of the industrial movement in England. They maintain that the rival interests must be reconciled, and that they can be reconciled and are being reconciled by their methods. How far they are justified in these hopes, and what progress they have made toward realizing them, we hope to examine in a future number.

Thomas Hughes.

ONE SEA-SIDE GRAVE.

UNMINDFUL of the roses,
Unmindful of the thorn,
A reaper tired reposes
Among his gathered corn:
So might I, till the morn!

Cold as the cold Decembers,
Past as the days that set,
While only one remembers
And all the rest forget,—
But one remembers yet.

Christina G. Rossetti.