



THE NEW TRADE-UNION MOVEMENT.

By URQUHART A. FORBES.

With Portraits of Trade-Union Officials.



HOUGH the material progress of trade unions and the growth of their influence among the working class during the last half-century has been as remarkable as it has been steady and continuous, it is only very recently that the general public has ceased to regard them as mere engines for the promotion of strikes, and begun in some degree to realize their true nature and aims. The strike of the London dockers however revealed the facts, not only that trade unionism, with its formidable organization for purposes of combat and its resolute determination to improve the position of the working man, is developing in a new direction, but also that the old spirit of hostility with which it was formerly regarded by the outer world is changing to one of friendly interest.

One consequence of the dock labourers' success has been a rush of trades unions to obtain the benefits of registration at the Friendly Societies Registry Office. In the first year after the passing of the first Trade Union Act of 1871, indeed, as many as sixty-six unions were registered; but these were mostly pre-existing bodies, many of them of long-standing, which sought for the protection of the law when first obtainable, and till lately the number of trade unions which obtained register for any one year has not been considerable. In 1875 the number was twenty-seven, and in 1876, thirty-five. In 1877 it was twenty-four; in 1878, twenty-two; 1879, seventeen; 1880, nineteen; 1881 and 1882, twenty-two each; 1883, twenty-three; 1884, twelve; 1885, thirteen; 1886, twenty-three; 1887, twenty-five; 1888, twenty-eight; and 1889, forty-five. Thus, during these fifteen years, until last year, the largest number had been thirty-five in 1876 (the result no doubt of the Trade Union Act of 1871 Amendment Act 1876), which fell to a minimum of twelve in 1884, and was only thirteen in 1885; while in 1889¹ the number rose to sixty-five, or ten more than the previous maximum. During this year however by the end of the first seven months it was already *seventy-five*, or more than even last year's maximum, and a very large proportion of the registries are those of avowedly new societies. The Trade-Union Movement appears to offer certain characteristics deserving the attention of all who are interested in the welfare of the working class, and it is now proposed to consider their nature by examining the history of trade



R. ALLEN & SONS, PHOTO.

JOHN BURNETT (LABOUR CORRESPONDENT,
BOARD OF TRADE).

¹ These and other details not hitherto in print are obtained from the Friendly Societies Registry Office.

union legislation: the objects and legal *status* of the older unions, and the points in which the newer bodies differ from them.

HISTORY OF TRADE-UNION LEGISLATION.

For centuries combinations of all sorts in reference to the contract of labour were visited by statute after statute with severe penalties. It was only in 1824—sixty-six years ago—that this system was put an end to, and from that time till 1871 the sting of the old legislation may be said to have still subsisted. The Act of 5 George IV. c. 195—"an act to repeal the laws relating to the combination of workmen and for other purposes therein mentioned,"—which is inseparably connected with the name of the late Joseph Hume—swept away all previous enactments against combinations in reference to the labour contract, and, bolder still, enacted that those who should enter into such combinations "should not therefore be subject or liable to any indictment or prosecution for conspiracy or to any other information or punishment whatever under the common or statute law." But it was too bold for its day, and was repealed in the next year (1825) by the 6 George IV. c. 129. This Act, whilst repealing previous enactments against combinations carefully omitted all reference to the common law, and made it penal, amongst other things, "if any person should molest or in any way obstruct another for the purpose of forcing or inducing such person to belong to any club or association or to contribute to any common fund." A decision of the Court of Queen's Bench,¹ decided that conspiring to do any of the acts referred to in the section quoted above was an offence,—the effect of which virtually was to put almost all trade unions anew outside of the pale of the law. An act therefore had to be passed in 1859,² providing that no workman or other person by reason merely of his entering into an agreement with other persons for the purpose of fixing or endeavouring to fix the rate of wages or remuneration, or by reason of his endeavouring peaceably and in a reasonable manner and without threat or intimidation directly or indirectly to persuade others to leave or abstain from work, should be deemed guilty of molestation or obstruction or subject to any prosecution or indictment for conspiracy.

Besides this, the negative aspect of the struggle—the endeavour of trade combinations to establish themselves as not illegal bodies by getting rid of the previous penalties of the law upon this working—there is also a positive side which must be noticed, the effort, namely, of the unions to obtain not merely toleration, but, for certain purposes, protection also from the law. Their way to this end lay through the Friendly Societies Acts.

There was a short period during which a small number of trade unions merely crept in, so to speak, under these enactments. But by far the larger number of those which took advantage of the Friendly Societies Acts availed themselves of a certain section—44 of the Friendly Societies Act of 1855,³ which allowed all societies established "for any purpose which is not illegal" to deposit their rules, obtaining thereby certain remedies in the case of disputes, but what was of most consequence to them, a summary remedy in cases of fraud or imposition. But courts of Justice were again narrow in their construction of the law, and a statute had to be passed which although temporary, must be considered of great moment in the history of trade unions, and the title of which—"an act to protect the funds of trade unions from embezzlement or misappropriation,"⁴ is noteworthy as presenting the first instance in which the term "trade union" was thus employed, it being the



A. & G. TAYLOR, PHOTO.

THOMAS BURT, M.P. (MINERS).

¹ Queen v. Rowlands, 7 Q. B. 671. ² 22 Vic. c. 34. ³ 18 & 19 Vic. c. 63. ⁴ 9 August, 1869.

first time that the legislature openly acted in favour of trade unions. This act (32 & 33 Vic. c.61) enacted that "an association of persons having rules, agreements, or practices among themselves as to the terms on which they or any of them will or will not consent to employ or be employed shall not by reason only that any of such rules,



PALMER & BENNETTO, PHOTO.

HENRY BROADHURST, M.P.

agreements or practices, may operate in restraint of trade, or that such association is partly for objects other than the objects in the Friendly Societies Acts be deemed for the purposes of the 24th section of the Friendly Societies Act 1855, for the punishment of frauds and impositions to be a society established for a purpose which is illegal, or not to be a Friendly Society within the meaning of the 44th section of the said act."

Although apparently negative in its form, it will be seen that the act is very positive in its effects. The legislature now recognizes the existence of trade unions, and that they are entitled to the actual protection of the law. The second battle of the trade unions, that for legal recognition, is henceforth won. It may be considered a striking proof of this fact, that, although as has been said, the Act was only a temporary one and expired on the 31 August, 1870, whilst the Trade Union

Act, 1871, only received the royal assent on the 29th June, 1871, all but ten months afterwards, no mischief appears to have arisen from the delay.

The Trade Union Act, 1871,¹ may be termed the Magna Charta of Trade Unions. It admitted them openly by name to the right of registration at the Friendly Societies office, but within a separate class of their own. It gave protection to the funds even of unregistered trade unions; but by a provision, as to which there would seem to

be some difference of opinion between the English and Scotch trade unions, whilst enacting that contracts bearing on the employment of labour (to use a general term) should not be deemed illegal; it declared them incapable of legal enforcement.



M. SAUVY, PHOTO.

J. MAWDSLEY (SPINNERS).

There was however one very curious result of the Act. It made past illegality a condition of future legality. By its definition clause² the term "trade union" was to mean "such combination . . . for regulating the relations between workmen and masters or between workmen and workmen or between masters and masters for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business as would if this Act had not been passed have been deemed to have been an unlawful combination by reason of some one or more of its purposes being in restraint of trade." Now there are a certain number of trade unions which, especially since the passing of the Act of 1869 (22 Vic. c. 34), limiting the meaning of "molestation" or

"obstruction," cannot be brought within this definition; which by their rules expressly disclaim all coercive action; and the absurd consequence followed, that because they were not unlawful combinations they could not obtain the benefits of the Act. Moreover, the investigations of the Friendly Societies Commission of 1870 showed that the deposit

¹ 34 & 35 Vic. c. 31.² Sec. 23.

of rules under the 44th section of the Friendly Societies Act of 1855 had not worked well, and no provision for the purpose was inserted in the Friendly Societies Act, 1875 (38 & 39 Vic. c. 60). This led to the introduction in the following session by Mr. Mundella of the Trade Union Act 1871 Amendment Act 1876 (39 & 40 Vic. c. 22), which defines a trade union as "a combination, whether temporary or permanent, for regulating the relations between workmen and masters, or between workmen and workmen, or between masters and masters, for imposing restrictive conditions on the conduct of any trade or business, whether such combination would or would not—" if the Trade Union Act, 1871, had not been passed—have been deemed an unlawful combination by reason of some one or more of its purposes being in restraint of trade. The only other step for their benefit was taken in the Provident Nomination and Small Intestacies Act, 1883 (46 & 47 Vic. c. 47), which extended to trade unions the same advantages as to nominations on death and the distribution of estates under £100 as to friendly societies, co-operative societies, and savings banks.

OBJECTS AND LEGAL STATUS OF THE OLDER UNIONS.

A trade union has a right on payment of a fee of £1 (and other fees for subsequent transactions) to become registered at the Friendly Societies Registry Office, and thereupon acquires most of the rights, though not the privileges, of a registered friendly society. Its property is legally vested in its trustees, in whose names it may sue and be sued, it has summary remedies against officers and others who may embezzle or misappropriate its funds; its members have the privilege of nominating at death up to £100, by an instrument which takes the place of a will, any person or persons (not an officer or servant of the trade union) to whom their share in the funds of the union may be paid, and in default of nomination or of a will such share is distributable amongst their next of kin without letters of administration. If they have stock in the funds in the names of trustees, and the trustees are dead or refuse to act or cannot be found, they may have such stock transferred by application to the registry office. Some of these rights belong even to unregistered trade unions. On the other hand, they are bound when once registered to register all alterations of rules, changes of names and offices, &c., &c., and to send yearly returns in a prescribed form to the registrar; and if they pay money on the death of children under ten, whether registered or unregistered, they can only do so within certain limits (£5 for children under six and £10 for children from six to ten), and on the certificate in a prescribed form of the registrar of deaths.

Some of the provisions of the law above referred to, those namely relating to payments on the death of members or their children, will make it clear to the reader that the operations of trade unions may and do go beyond the limits of their definition. In the case of the largest and strongest trade unions such operations greatly transcend these limits. A reference to the interesting reports of Mr. John Burnett, the labour correspondent of the Board of Trade, will show that all without exception of the larger unions reporting to him—meaning by this those having more than 1,000 members—provide for something more than what merely concerns the regulating relations or imposing conditions on the conduct of trade. The Blackburn Power Loom Weavers Provident Society, for instance, though its expenditure is confined under two heads, provides for funerals as well as for strikes, failures as they are termed, &c., &c. The Durham Miners Confident Association provides for sick and funeral benefits as well as for its other expenses, and there is scarcely one on the list which does not embrace at least both these benefits. The Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants provides



J. C. HATTERSLEY, PHOTO.

HENRY SLATTER, J.P. (PRINTERS).

for the unemployed, sickness, superannuation, and accidents, and an orphan fund, besides "legal defence" and "protection." The Kent and Sussex Labourers Union provides for sickness, emigration, migration, funerals, and members' wives confinements, besides lock-outs and other benefits. The United Society of Boilermakers and Iron Shipbuilders provides for the unemployed, sickness and surgical assistance, superannuation and funerals, as well as for disputes. The Amalgamated Society of Tailors provides for travellers and the unemployed, with a special fund for those unemployed through disease in the family, sickness, superannuation, and funerals, as well as for trade protection and grants to other trades and societies. The Operative Bricklayers Society provides for sickness, accidents, superannuation, and funerals, as well as for trade privileges; the National Association of Operative Plasterers for sickness, accidents, superannuation, funerals, and travelling relief, as well as for disputes and gifts to other trades; the Operative Stonemasons Society for sickness, accident, superannuation, funerals, and travellers, as well as for disputes; the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners for the unemployed, sick, superannuation,



H. T. REED, PHOTO.

C. J. DRUMMOND (LONDON SOCIETY OF COMPOSITORS).

accidents, loss of tools, and funerals, as well as for trade protection; the Amalgamated Society of Engineers for the unemployed, sickness, superannuation, accidents, benevolent assistance to its members and other trades, besides its contingent or dispute fund. Of the societies reporting to him, Mr. Burnett tells us that 32 per cent. have superannuation benefit, 66 per cent. sick benefit, 70 per cent. unemployed benefit, and 81 per cent. funeral benefit funds.¹

Nor must it be supposed for a moment that these benefits are a mere show to disguise the really militant character of the organization. On the contrary, it can never be too often repeated that under ordinary circumstances the expenditure on trade disputes represents only a fraction of the expenditure of a well-established trade union. Thus Mr. Burnett tells us that in 1888 thirty-nine societies, with 274,727 members, expended only £32,729 on disputes, or an average of 2s. 4½d. per head.² Even where this average is exceeded it generally falls far short of the expenditure for benefit purposes; as, for example, in the case of the United Society of Boilermakers and

Iron Shipbuilders, where it amounted to 3s. 4½d. per head as against 5s. 9d. spent on the unemployed, 14s. 0¼d. on the sick, and 2s. 2¼d. on funerals; and in the case of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, where it was 3s. 7d. per head on disputes as against £1 4s. 0¼d. on the unemployed, 14s. 4¼d. on the sick and accidents, 3s. 7¼d. on superannuation, and 2s. 6¾d. on funerals. And if we look into the expenditure of individual societies, considering what trade unions are legally defined and popularly held to be, the amount of their expenditure on disputes is often almost ludicrously small. For instance, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors expended per head 1s. 7½d. on travellers; 1½d. on those unemployed through infectious disease in the family; 13s. 4¾d. on sickness; 9¾d. on superannuation; 3s. 11¾d. on funerals; ½d. on benevolent gifts, and 7½d. on disputes. The Steam-Engine Makers Society expended 11s. 9½d. per head on the unemployed; 11s. 2d. on the sick and accidents; 6s. 11¾d. on superannuation; 2s. 11½d. on funerals; and 5¼d. on disputes. The Operative Stonemasons Society expended 3s. 7½d. on travelling relief; as much as £1 1s. 7d. on sickness and accidents; 8s. 6½d. on superannuation; 4s. 5¾d. on funerals, and 4d. on disputes. Lastly, the Friendly Society of Ironfounders expended on its merely unemployed members as much as £1 0s. 8½d., showing severe pressure on the trade;

¹ Third Report, 1889, p. 3.

² These and the following figures are taken from the Third Report, 1889, p. 4, p. 36, et seq.

on sickness and accident 11s. 2½d. per head ; on superannuation 13s. 2d. ; on funerals 3s. 7d. ; and on disputes—only 2½d. per member !

It is very important to realize the full meaning of this fact. It means that hitherto the larger, stronger societies, those which attract to themselves the greater number of members and maintain themselves for a longer period, have found it necessary to provide for as many as possible of the wants of their members, not only for their relief when out of employment through the ordinary vicissitudes of trade, but for their sickness, their old age, the insurance of their funeral expenses, &c. It follows that it is simply impossible that an institution of this kind should be, as many through ignorance and folly too often suppose, a mere *striking machine*. It might far more truly be called an *anti-strike machine*. For from what source can all this abundant expenditure for real benefit purposes proceed, but from the pockets of those who are in work? From the moment they are out of work the accumulation of funds for benefit purposes stops *pro tanto*, and the expenditure increases in exact proportion as the income of the union is reduced. The existence of any one single benefit, be it merely accident or funeral, acts so far as a check upon any rash striking ; still more so an accumulation of benefits such as those of the Amalgamated Engineers, or carpenters, or railway servants.

But does the trade union thereby prove false to its legal and quite true character as an institution for regulating trade and labour? On the contrary, a large range of benefits enables it to act with all the greater weight and energy when necessary. For every one of these benefits is a separate link binding the member to his union ; nor yet the member only, for as has been justly observed, it brings in the women. Thus, whilst one of these great amalgamated societies may act more slowly in resisting a lock-out or ordering a strike, when it does act its working is as that of a steam-hammer as compared with ordinary hammers wielded by human arms. The employers, who know this well, and are fully aware of the strength of these great institutions, are very chary of committing themselves to a conflict with them, and hence unions such as those we have been considering may be called anti-strike machines in so far as they obviate the necessity for strikes because they are able sufficiently to regulate the trade without them.

The new trade union movement is to a great extent antagonistic to the spirit of the older institutions just described.



H. T. REED, PHOTO.

GEORGE SHIPTON (LONDON TRADES COUNCIL).



R. WOLSTENHOLME, PHOTO.

THOMAS BIRTWISTLE, J.P. (WEAVERS).

POINTS OF DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OLD AND NEW MOVEMENTS.

In the first place, it is largely a labourers' or unskilled labourers' movement as distinguished from one of artisans or skilled labourers. A few labourers' unions were already on the register of the Friendly Societies Office, but these were mostly of what

must be considered skilled labourers. The agricultural labourer, for instance, though not often so considered, is really a skilled labourer, since without some previous training he cannot earn a livelihood by digging, still less ploughing, a field, as a clerk out of work may, if physically capable of it, earn a day's wages at the docks. The miner, again, is a labourer who needs skill of a still higher character. Apart from the registered unions belonging to these two classes, the only labourers unions registered prior to 1889 appear to be those of the Hull Bricklayers Labourers Protection, Accident, and Burial Society, which made no return for 1888; the General Labourers Amalgamated Union in Wigmore Street, which after eighteen years' existence has 281 members only; the Amalgamated Labour League, Hempton, Norfolk, with seventy-eight members; the Durham Confident Labourers Association, Bishop Auckland, which made no return; the Birmingham Stone Sawyers' and Masons' Labourers Accident, Trade, and Burial Society (no return); the United Order of General Labourers of London, with ninety-eight members; the Liverpool United Dock Labourers and Quay Porters Trade Benefit Society (no return); the Shipyard Helpers Society, Sunderland (no return); and the National Labour Federation, with 1,144 members. Even including those unions chiefly agricultural but admitting general labourers, as the Kent and Sussex Labourers Union (8,500 members), and the Amalgamated Society of General and Farm Labourers of Great Britain and Ireland (twenty-nine members), the total would only amount to nine societies out of 254 on the register.



A. BASSANO, PHOTO.

JOHN BURNS (L.C.C.).

Let us now compare with these some of the registries of the latter end of 1889 and 1890. In the month of December, 1889, were registered a "National Amalgamated Labourers Union of Great Britain and Ireland," a "Leeds United Builders' Labourers Society," and a "New Freemen of the River Thames Wharf, Dock, and Canal Labour Protection Society." In January of this year were registered a "National Amalgamated Coal Porters Union of Inland and Sea-borne Coal Workers"; in February a "Builders' Labourers Union," a "Northwich and District Amalgamated Society of Salt-workers, Alkali-workers, Mechanics, and General Labourers,"

and a "Covent Garden Porters Union"; in March a "Federation of Salt-workers, Alkali-workers, and Mechanics and General Labourers" at Wharton, Cheshire; an "Amalgamated Society of Gas-Workers, Brickmakers, and General Labourers" at Birmingham; a "National Association of Builders' Labourers" also at Birmingham; and a "United Builders' Labourers Union"; and in April a "Norfolk and Norwich Labour Union," a "Universal Federation of House and Ship Painters' Labourers," and a "South Side Labour Federation League." In some of these cases, it will be observed, the labourers form unions of their own, while in others they are united with mechanics or artisans. Thus we have a total of fourteen out of seventy-five unions registered in the *seven* months December 1889—July 1890, as against nine surviving in name at least out of the 254 unions previously on the register for the whole period of *seventeen* years since the first Trade Union Act.

Another remarkable feature of many of these new unions, not confined to those of labourers, is that they are purely militant, constituted solely for the purpose of regulating the trade—*e.g.* by fixing hours of labour or rates of wages, and hold out scarcely any or no benefits. In a large number of cases this results probably from the advice given by Mr. John Burns who, impatient of the reluctance shown by the larger unions with their many benefits to enter upon or encourage labour contests without absolute necessity, has virtually striven to bring back the trade union within the limits of its legal definition.

Let us now consider these two features. The labourers, as distinct from the mechanics or artisans, the unskilled labourers as distinct from the skilled ones, are

organizing themselves in unions. What will be the attitude of these new unions towards the older ones, or of the older ones towards them? Will the new ones seek, and will they be admitted, to send, representatives to trade union congresses, and be represented on the Trade Union Council? If so, it will be virtually a new and most important departure in the history of the trade union movement. For it must be remembered that the labourer is, under one aspect, essentially the enemy of the artisan, the ally, at least potential, of the employer against him. The constant dream of many mechanics or skilled labourers of a machine worked by unskilled labourers or by women—and formerly indeed by children—who through the lesser remuneration they are found to accept are virtually equivalent to unskilled labourers. Moreover, even without the introduction of machinery, in all labour disputes the substitute most ready to the hand of the employer for the artisan on strike or locked out is the labourer who worked under him. Hence the provisions not unfrequently found in the older trade unions' rules imposing penalties, for instance, for teaching the trade to labourers, and other rules directed against them. If, then, these new labourers' unions are admitted on a footing of equality to take part in the direction of the trade union movement generally, it will be the breaking down of a real partition wall between classes.

It must, apparently, be at any rate anticipated that the first result of the admission of the unions of last year and this, whether of labourers or others, to a share in the direction of the general movement, will be to impart to it a more militant character. But this in all probability will not last. There is but one school of human experience in which the same lessons have to be learnt. Mr. John Burns himself is too able and too sincere a man not to acknowledge, when he has become convinced of it, that he has been misled in his efforts to confine the work of trade unions to the mere regulating of trade. A union of this description may gather members and funds whilst there is a fit of enthusiasm upon the class of workers which it seeks to bring together. But it is the misfortune of such combinations that seasons of pressure and of prosperity alike may be fatal to them, when once the fit of enthusiasm is over.

In bad times the men soon find that they literally cannot afford to contribute to a union which gives them nothing in return. In good times, with the improvidence which is too characteristic of the class, they easily come to think that they will never require its help. In either case they will cease to attend meetings, and end by dropping their subscriptions; the result of it all being, not unfrequently, that the secretary or treasurer runs away with the funds—if any remain. It seems therefore certain that the new unions, if they are to maintain themselves—that the unions of labourers like their predecessors those of artisans—will have to lay hold on their members by providing for the ordinary needs of a working man's life, by holding out to them benefits when out of employment, in sickness, or death, &c., &c.

That there will be friction between workers in different employments owing to the use of the new trade unions it is impossible to doubt. Already in one recent case there has been a strike among the majority of the workmen at one establishment, all belonging to one trade union, because of the employment there of two or three men belonging to another. But on the whole it is allowable to look forward with confidence to the issue of the new trade union movement. No doubt there have been, there are, there will be bad trade unions as well as good, though it is not probable that in the nature of things, the bad ones can ever keep their footing very long. But on the whole our English trade unions have been the best of schools for the training of our working classes, and we should rejoice to see those schools multiplied. Men have learned in these schools to stand shoulder to shoulder, to endure and to share hardships, to subordinate



LONDON STEREOSCOPIC CO., PHOTO.

BEN TILLET (DOCKERS).

their private interests to the attainment of a common object, and this has been to them an invaluable discipline.

The experience of those best qualified to judge—and the fact is confirmed even by men who have been turned out of their unions—is, that the trade unionist is, almost universally, a more dependable man than the non-unionist.¹ The trade unionist is often narrow, and exhibits little of that marvellous shrewdness, business capacity, and—if one may say so—business audacity which distributive cooperation has already developed, but he is generally more trustworthy, more generous-minded, more human than the cooperator of the present day. Could the qualities of both types be combined, it would be impossible to set bounds to the amount of good work which might be done. It is on this account that some who have most carefully studied the question have been led to regard with favour the idea of trade union cooperation as being perhaps the only solution of a problem which cannot be insoluble and must not be left unsolved.



A. WESTON, PHOTO.

TOM MANN (DOCKERS).

many sides as possible by providing for as many of his needs as they can, the way in which they do this is in some respects open to criticism. There seems little doubt, for instance, that the organization of the great amalgamated societies, marvellous as an engine for the regulation of labour, does not tend to economy in relief. This especially



LONDON STEREOSCOPIC CO., PHOTO.

J. E. WILLIAMS (GENERAL LABOURERS).

applies to the ingenious principle of the equalization of funds between the branches, the aim of which is that the union should be prepared on every point for conflict, the executive being authorized to demand from any branch which has a surplus beyond a certain sum per head so much as it may think necessary of that surplus in order to hand it over to any branch which has less per head than the fixed sum. It is simply impossible under such a system to expect economy of management in the branches, since any accumulation of funds by good management in one branch is always liable to be taken away from it for the benefit of some other which has perhaps been badly managed. And more or less this must be the case in all trade unions, even of the most individual character. For inasmuch as the regulation of trade must always be their primary object, every benefit is subservient to that, and a sickness or mortality fund is not likely to be as carefully managed when it is known that its accumulations may be swept away by a labour conflict as in a mere friendly society. Accordingly it would seem that whenever the results of the sickness of trade unions have been scientifically examined it has been found to have cost them more than it should have done.

¹ In proof of this it may be mentioned that a late foreman of engineers at Price's Candle Factory, who had left the Amalgamated Society of Engineers because he found them too narrow, was in the habit of saying that he scarcely ever employed a non-unionist as he could not trust them.

There is however one point as to which trade unionists seem to need a word of advice. Admirable as is the endeavour of the old-established trade unions to grapple hold of the working man's life from as

There is, moreover, one benefit which trade unions hold out much more frequently than the friendly societies of our day, and which it is to be feared is dragging them down—old age pay, or superannuation as it is generally termed. Mr. Burnett in his last report tells us that in 1887 thirty-two unions having superannuation benefit paid £74,149 for this purpose, but in 1888 £83,719, being an increase of $12\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. In a few cases special superannuation levies had been made—the mere fact of such levies proving the insufficiency of the ordinary contributions for the purpose—but in the great majority of instances apparently the unions are merely letting themselves drift. The theory so popular among philanthropists that working men should, when young, provide an annuity for themselves in their old age is indeed itself open to question. In the first place, it is difficult to see how the working man is able to carry it out; and in the next it may be questioned whether a family, and a moral one, is not the best provision for old age in the working class—children so efficiently brought up by and so attached to their parents as to be able and willing to maintain them when they are past work.

It must be added in conclusion that this paper has dealt only with *registered* trade unions. There are a vast number of unregistered ones; Mr. Burnett enumerates many by name, and no doubt does not know them all. There are therefore no means of stating their number, which, most probably, is four or five times as great as that of the registered ones, or say, from 1,000 to 1,250. But whatever the proportion may be, there is no reason for supposing that what has been stated with regard to the newly-registered unions of 1889-90 is in any wise inapplicable to the unregistered ones. On the contrary, it is probable that these consist still more largely of labourers, and still more often abstain from providing any specific benefits. Thus, though the point of view of this article has lain, so to speak, rather on the outskirts of the movement, its conclusions may in all probability be taken to be true of it as a whole.



P. FAIRCLOUGH, PHOTO.

WILLIAM STANLEY (NATIONAL LABOURERS).

