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*TRADE UNIONISM.*

Recent developments in the system of trade unionism have brought into the government of the country a new force, of which it would be well for our legislators and statesmen to take very earnest heed. The amalgamation of all the unions connected with the work of the railways in the United Kingdom, which has long been talked about, has now been accomplished, and the absolute control of its 200,000 members is placed in the hands of a council of twenty-five of its leaders. To this body is given the power of calling on, or calling off, a strike of the whole body of railway employees for any cause whatever without consultation with the men or notice to the companies. It is hard to realize the consequences of interference with the means of transportation in such a country as England, where a dense population is dependent not only for its comforts, but for its daily bread upon the daily supplies which the railways bring to its doors. Nor is it the capitalists with whom the trades unions are at war who will be the first or principal sufferers by such an act of hostility. It is the very poor whose daily wage is cut off, and whose daily modicum of food and fuel can no longer be obtained—who have no reserve upon which they can draw either of money or provisions—who will first feel the pinch of privation. Nor is it the men who may properly be held responsible for such extreme measures who will feel their effects most severely—still less the leaders, who, it may be assured, have taken good care of themselves; it is the wives and children, the aged and infirm, who cannot feel the joy of conflict which may for a time sustain those engaged in the combat, but who must endure in silence whatever may befall.

But it will be said, Surely such a power as this council possesses will not be exercised except to right some grievous wrong for which redress has been refused, or to obtain some benefit wrongfully withheld. It will not be put in force for anything less than some vital issue which affects the whole body concerned and which cannot be settled in any less violent manner.

Will it not?