

can show whether or not there is any foundation for this dread. Meanwhile, it may be noted that the railway servants are among the least likely to be leaders in an uprising of labour. They are very loosely bound together in their union; their experience of corporate action is slender in the extreme; their notorious want of leisure has prevented them from studying, even had they been so disposed, the questions with which recent labour struggles have familiarised other workers.

Moreover, the years 1889 and 1890 were prolific in strikes. The working class is heartily weary of the worry of them, so that, unless some specially deep-seated grievance arises into prominent notice, there is little likelihood of the feeling of fear having any speedy justification in fact. It is, however, to be remembered, that we are probably on a downward curve of trade fluctuation, and that this is generally productive of trade disputes. Wisely conducted and strongly supported unions, with appeals to arbitration where disputes cannot be prevented otherwise are the visible palliatives. Their judicious exercise may enable us to get round awkward corners.

While resistance to sectional combinations, whether of labour or capital, is inexpedient as a general principle, it would appear as though the trade union and the joint-stock company, however they may develop, do not supply a permanent solution of the labour problem, though they may contain the germs of a mediate solution. The difficulty, so far as both of these forms of combination are concerned, is, that men in a position of considerable power are apt to use it badly, whether this power is possessed by them because they have been entrusted with large masses of capital, or whether they feel, perhaps, in an exaggerated form, the irresistible force of their labour combination. Meanwhile, the existing checks to these tendencies—publicity and criticism—may well be applied constantly, and much may be hoped from the growing discredit which is overtaking short-sighted self-regarding and socially injurious action on the part of individuals or of corporations.