

It is, for instance, generally taken for granted that "Labour" describes a political entity with identical interests and aims. Yet nothing is clearer than the frequently divided purpose and occasional rivalry of the Unions. The competitive principle refuses even to be exorcised by the magic wand of Socialism. There are almost as many sects among the Socialists as there were among the Pharisees, and each is convinced that it offers to the faithful the only true gospel of Collectivism. Nowhere are the appeals for unity more clamant than at the Trade Union Congress; and nowhere, it must be admitted, is there a greater necessity for that liberty in non-essentials and charity in all things which should accompany such unity in essentials. To take a classic case, what has been more evident for years than that the interests of Durham and Northumberland coal-miners have not been identical, in such a material matter as the hours of labour, with those of other colliery districts? For half a century the northernmost counties have maintained wholly separate organisations and exercised the right of private judgment and of Trade Union autonomy. It is not without significance that the I.L.P. and other Socialist bodies have hitherto regarded Northumberland and Durham as the least responsive of all industrial districts, slow in the appreciation of their propaganda and apathetic in the reception of their principles. They held a month's campaign immediately prior to the General Election for the express purpose of disintegrating the Labour forces behind Mr. Thomas Burt and Mr. Charles Fenwick. Mr. Keir Hardie wound up the campaign in person and the nature of his reception was such as to forbid any Socialist candidature in these parts. The sequel was equally significant. Both Mr. Burt and Mr. Fenwick had record majorities, the right hon. Member for Morpeth polling three to one, whilst the Member for the Wansbeck Division had the enormous majority of 7176.

An economic fact of some importance in this connection is the presence in the mining districts of Northumberland of numerous co-operative societies enjoying a large measure of