

COMBINATION.

All combinations for legitimate purposes are both proper and wise. We make no exception to any trade or profession; combination will secure advantages in every department, when single individual efforts would be entirely abortive. It has been well said: "Association is the genius of the age," and owing to the tendency of industries and professions to consolidate their respective forces for the better protection or advancement of their interests, those callings which are not organized and disciplined, are unavoidably weakened and become impotent when arrayed against a formidable combination of antagonistic interests. The unpracticed and the unorganized must always yield before discipline and organization. The history of the "Dark Ages" will afford an ample illustration of the feeble condition of humanity when disunited; when not bound together for promotion of interests, but are separated, as it were, by wide gulfs.

Civilization made no advancement when all the elements of civilization and classes of society were jumbled together, diversified and stormy. The governments and society were in a lamentable state of chaos, the inevitable result of radical disorganization. But as the rays of modern light illumined the gloom, the different elements and diverse interests commenced to centralize; to become united and make progress on the highway of civilization. The fifteenth century witnessed the birth of diplomacy. This was the time in the history of Europe, when governments began to have frequent intercourse with each other, and formed relations which led to powerful combinations for warlike purposes; for the aggrandizement of political schemes; and which finally resulted in that system called the "Balance of power." By investigation in the history of this dark blot in the career of mankind, it will be found that it was by the combined efforts of the more intellectual and advanced

elements of society that civilization was finally enabled to take an advance step, and society to break away from the vale of darkness. Combination seems to be an inherent attribute of human nature. It is a beautiful attribute; it is the means of bringing nations and individuals into closer union and friendship; and "friendship combines the hearts of men."

The various societies which we see around us, called into being by mutual interests and protection; the various trade unions; the grange, and other worthy organizations, are all a blessing to mankind. 'Tis true that evil results sometimes follow the combinations of certain classes of people. Evil consequences may flow from the very best conditions. Trade unions and workingmen's associations sometimes go astray and exercise illegitimate functions, but the main object for which they are instituted—protection against the unjust encroachments of capital—is a laudable one. What would be the state of the laboring classes, admitting that considerations of a pecuniary nature need not call them together, if they simply performed the general routine of daily life, without at times coming together to discuss various subjects which draw from the fund of knowledge much that goes to edify and enlighten them? The more that men come in contact with each other, the more their horizon of ideas expands; their minds enlarge, and their judgment is made clearer.

Never in the history of agriculture did there occur a movement which electrified and stirred the farming community as did the "Grange movement." Before this the farmers of our country had been living not entirely unlike the feudal lords of old. There seemed to be but little sociability existing among them. Each farmer, with his family and hired help, lived too much isolated from his neighbor. Then, too, they did not take that interest in political affairs which they should, but remained, as it were, nonentities in the political world. The Grange movement