

vince me, that though the *right* of combination, abstractly considered, is just and proper, the strikes which would result from it as consequences would be productive of much evil and little good; and in an argument with my friend William on the subject, I ventured to assure him that his house-painters' union would never benefit the operative house painters as a class, and urged him to give up his clerkship. "There is a want," I said, "of true leadership among our operatives in these combinations. It is the wilder spirits that dictate the conditions; and, pitching their demands high, they begin usually by enforcing acquiescence in them on the quieter and more moderate among their companions. They are tyrants to their fellows ere they come into collision with their masters, and have thus an enemy in the camp, not unwilling to take advantage of their seasons of weakness, and prepared to rejoice, though secretly mayhap, in their defeat and reverses. And further, their discomfiture will be always quite certain enough when seasons of depression come, from the circumstance that, fixing their terms in prosperous times, they will fix them with reference rather to their present power of enforcing them, than to that medium line of fair and equal adjustment on which a conscientious man could plant his foot and make a firm stand. Men such as you, able and ready to work in behalf of these combinations, will of course get the work to do, but you will have little or no power given you in their direction: the direction will be apparently in the hands of a few fluent *gabbers*; and yet even they will not be the actual directors,—they will be but the exponents and voices of the general mediocre sentiment and inferior sense of the mass as a whole, and acceptable only so long as they give utterance to that; and so, ultimately, exceedingly little will be won in this way for working men. It is well that they should be allowed to combine, seeing that combination is permitted to those who employ them; but until the majority of our working men of the south become very different from what they now are,—greatly wiser and greatly better,—there will be more lost than gained by their combinations. According to