According to the thirty-third annual *Report* of that society, it appears that in 1883 the union consisted of 424 branches, chiefly in towns in the British Isles, but with a fair sprinkling in Canada, the United States, Australia, India, and other parts of the globe. The number of members was 50,418. A branch must consist of not fewer than seven members or more than three hundred. The constitution is pre-eminently democratic. Each branch is itself a completely organized body. It selects and elects its own officers ; it collects, holds, and spends its own funds ; and it manages the whole of the business which affects itself alone. The officers of the branch are elected at general meetings at which every member must be present under the penalty of a fine. Members who refuse to be nominated for office, or who refuse to serve if elected, are also subject to fines, and officers who neglect their business either by coming late to meetings or absenting themselves altogether are similarly punished. A meeting of the members of each branch is held every fortnight for the transaction of ordinary business, such as receiving subscriptions and deciding upon propositions for new members. These meetings begin at half-past 7 in the evening, and close at half-past 9 or 10 o’clock, but the hours are altered when it is convenient to alter them. The duties of the secretary are onerous, and his responsibility is great. No one therefore is eligible who has not been in the society two years successively, and “ no member shall be elected as secretary who keeps a public or beer house.” He has charge of the accounts of his branch, and con­ducts its correspondence. He has to see to the payment of members who are entitled to travelling relief donation, sick, superannuation, or funeral benefit. He has to summon meetings, keep minutes, report to the general secretary as to the state of trade in the dis­trict, the number of men out of work, or on the other hand he has to state what men are wanted, and he has also “to transact any other business that belongs to his office.” The president, vice- president, and assistant secretary of a branch are elected quarterly, while the secretary and referee are elected annually. Members are exempt if they are fifty years of age, or if they reside more than 3 miles from the club house ; and they are disqualified if they are 10s. in arrear with their contributions. There are also book­keepers, money stewards, doorkeepers, treasurers, and auditors, the nature of whose work is evident from their titles. There are also sick stewards, whose duties are to visit the sick twice a week, to report their visits to the meetings of the branch, and to carry the invalid his sick benefit. None of the offices are honorary. In branches numbering fewer than fifty members every officer is allowed 4d., and in branches numbering fifty and upwards 6d., for his attendance on branch meeting nights. The secretary is paid annually and according to the size of the branch. The lowest amount is £1, 5s. for a branch of ten members, the highest £10, 4s. for a branch of three hundred. The auditors are paid at a lower rate, which varies from 9d. to 4s. 8d., while the treasurer is paid 10 per cent. on the sum set apart for use. Each branch has also a committee, which has power to determine anything whereon the society’s rules are silent. The books of the branch are open to their inspection; they can summon meetings, and they have vari­ous other duties. Each member of this committee receives 6d. for each meeting he attends, and is fined 6d. for each meeting from which he is absent. In any district in which there are more branches than one, a local district committee must be formed, con­sisting of seven members, each branch as nearly as practicable selecting an equal number. Where there are seven branches, each one sends a representative. The duties of this committee are to “ watch over the interests of the trade, and transact such business as affects the district generally. ” It must not, however, interfere with the business of any particular branch of the society. The central authority is vested in a general or executive council, con­sisting of thirty-seven members, of whom eleven represent metro­politan branches, the others being from the provinces, including Scotland and Ireland. As the country councillors cannot con­veniently attend frequent meetings in London, the ordinary management is entrusted to the eleven London members, who are called the local council, and the council is also further broken up into various committees for managing the details of the society. This council hears appeals from branches, advises, forbids, initiates, and terminates strikes. The general secretary receives a salary of £4 a week and lives rent free. He also receives 1s. 6d. each time he attends a council meeting, and is paid for any special journeys undertaken or extra work done. His assistants receive £2, 10s. a week each, and have to give the whole of their time to the associa­tion. They have to compile and issue a monthly report as well as quarterly and yearly reports. The last-named is quite a formid­able volume, consisting of nearly7 400 pages of large post octavo, and those of other societies are similar. The general secretary’s hours of business are fixed from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. He has power to authorize members who are on donation to be removed from one branch to another where there is a probability of employment, and he has to keep a register of all the members of the society, stating when and where admitted, age, married or single, and whether a member has received any part of the financial money. In the Amalgamated Society of Engineers the contribution of each member is generally 1s. a week, and if a man be in arrears he is suspended from the benefits of the society, unless indeed he is out of work or in distressed circumstances. At the end of 1883 the union had a balance in hand of £178,128, or upwards of £3, 10s. a man.

In some trade unions—for example, those of the compositors— there is a special body (“ fathers of chapels”) whose business it is to see that the rules and regulations of the societies they belong to are faithfully observed in the establishments where they are employed. In others again—for instance, in the National Agricultural Labourers Union, as distinguished from the Federal Union of Agricultural Labourers—the system of management is completely centralized, the secretary or the executive committee having entire control of the funds and business of the whole association. In all large towns there are trade councils formed of delegates from the different trade unions within their area, whose function it is to discuss and supervise the general interests of the unionists in the several trades of which they are representative. Moreover, an annual trade unions congress is held in some great centre of industry and population in one of the three kingdoms, at which delegates from almost all the trade unions throughout the realm are present and take part in debating questions, whether social or political, which are of special interest to the working classes. At these assemblies, which have now been held for twenty consecutive years, a parliamentary com­mittee, which remains in existence for the ensuing twelvemonth, is chosen, to whom the whole body of trade unionists looks for counsel and assistance with respect to legislation intended or desired on their behalf. To the action of the trade unions congress and their parliamentary committee much of the legislation which has been recently effected on questions affecting the welfare of the order of the community to which they belong is to be attri­buted,— notably the Employers’ Liability Act and the amended Factory and Mines Acts. (See *Trade Unions, &c.,* by William Trant.)

The objects of trade unions are twofold,—first, those of a friendly or benefit society, and, secondly, those of a trade society or guild. In the former capacity they afford relief to their members when they are out of work from any cause, including sickness or accident; they occasionally provide them with superannuation allowances, and they almost always make burial allowances on account of deceased members and their wives. In the latter capacity it is their special business to promote what they conceive to be the interests of the trade with which they are connected by placing the workmen, so far as combination will fulfil that purpose, on a footing approaching to equality with the capitalists by whom they are employed in the disposal of their labour. Of course this is the great object for which the unions really exist. But, as the com­missioners on trade unions have pointed out, it is found desirable to conjoin the objects of a friendly or benefit society with it, because by that means additional members and funds are obtained, and the authority which the union as a trade society has over its members is thus augmented. The leading aims of all trade union­ism are to increase wages and to diminish the labour by which it is needful to earn them, and further to secure a more equal dis­tribution of work among the workmen in any given trade than would be the case under a regime of unrestricted competition. Hence their rules prescribe a minimum amount of wages to be accepted and a maximum amount of work to be done by their members, and prohibit piece work or working overtime. The methods by which the unionists endeavour to accomplish their end, which is in a sense the monopoly of the labour market, are either direct or indirect. The direct method is a “strike,” or simultaneous cessation of labour on the part of the workmen. It is the ultimate sanction as between the employed and their em­ployers of the demands made by the union. But, where the unionists are strong, the mere threat of a strike is often sufficient to fulfil the intended purpose, and arbitration is still more frequently found effectual for bringing about a settlement or com­promise. The indirect methods to which the trade unionists resort for reaching their aims are by limiting the number of workmen to be employed in any trade and by repressing or discountenancing competition among those who are actually employed in it. Most of them forbid the admission of more than a stipulated proportion of apprentices, and some of them prohibit the engagement of women to do work which can be done by men. Nearly all of them resist the common employment of unionists and non-unionists, and do their best to exclude non-unionists from employment altogether. But the amount expended by trade unions in the conduct of trade disputes is very much less than is generally imagined. Mr George Howell, for instance, showed conclusively in the *Contemporary Review* that such was the case three or four years ago, and Mr Murchie, the chairman of the parliamentary committee, stated at the trade unions congress at Stockport in the autumn of 1885 that Mr Howell’s contentions had been signally confirmed by more recent experience. Taking the seven largest trade unions, those whose statistics had been relied on by Mr Howell—namely, the Amalgamated Engineers, the Ironfounders, the Boiler Makers