

in the form of a moral innuendo. Count Tolstoy, in one of his most recent works, formally asserts it. All the wealth of the world, he says, is due to the men "the palms of whose hands manual labour has hardened." In a letter addressed to the *Times* Mr. Lloyd-George asserted the same thing, as though it were generally admitted and axiomatic. He was, he said, no Socialist; but he wanted to see more wealth circulating among the manual labourers, to whom all other classes owed whatever wealth they possessed. In inquiring, therefore, whether, when its meaning is fully realised, this doctrine is one which any sane man can defend, or even seriously hold, we shall not be invidiously selecting any one group of men for our criticisms.

Our preliminary criticism need not detain us long. In order to see what the above claim made on behalf of labour in its limited sense means, we have to consider not only what the term includes, but also what it excludes. For this doctrine, like all others, has necessarily a negative as well as a positive form. If all wealth is produced by labour, nothing that is not labour plays a part in the production of wealth. Thus, labour being understood in the sense in which the Labour Party understand it, no exertion or achievement of the human mind, other than those essential to or resulting from the average industrial task performable by the average man, has, according to the idea in vogue amongst that party at present, any effect in enhancing the productive efficiency of mankind.

Is any one prepared to defend this monstrous proposition? I shall probably be doing the Labour Members no more than justice if I say that were the question thus plainly put to them they would not defend it themselves. They would be compelled by common sense to qualify it in some way or other; and it is probable that most of them, in seeking for the qualification requisite, would follow Ruskin, and seek for it in an enlarged conception of skill.

Let us once again, then, consider what his conception of skill is. His conception of skill is some exceptional mental