

developing and exerting these, will rise to the posts now occupied by statesmen of a different origin? There is nothing impossible in this. Men of the humblest parentage have often, at all periods, risen to the highest stations. Cardinal Wolsey was the son of a butcher. But if all the cardinals of his time had been sons of butchers likewise, and had during their earlier years practised the paternal trade, the policy of Rome during the time of Henry VIII. would not, for that reason, have represented the dead-meat trade. No more would a Cabinet of great statesmen, who happened to have once been labourers, represent for that reason the average labourer of the average masses of mankind. But perhaps the implication of those who look forward to Labour Cabinets is that, though those who compose them would have ceased to be labourers themselves, and would govern in virtue of faculties not possessed by the majority of labourers, their sympathies would identify them with the interests of the ordinary labourers only, and that, imagining manual labour to be the sole and efficient cause of all material prosperity and all progress in the arts of life, would deliberately set themselves to crush all other classes out whose talents and whose methods of exerting them differentiated them to any marked degree from their fellows.

A Labour Cabinet or a Labour Government can mean nothing unless its meaning is dependent on one or other of the above assumptions; and the last supposition, which, if true, would alone have any practical significance, involves absurdities from which in theory even the more thoughtful Socialists would recoil, and which their practical aspirations repudiate. The ideal of a State which they avowedly have before them is one wholly inconsistent with the language which they use, and the thoughts which they cherish, as agitators. In their constructive schemes for the future they tacitly and obliquely recognise that the ordinary labour, which they flatter as producing all things, would, in a country like ours, be practically sterile and helpless if it were not directed by knowledge, energy, and