

admits this, so he adds two others ; and what are they ? They are, want of imagination, and ignorance !

How hazy and feeble his thought in this connection was may be seen by contrasting this infatuated assertion with the truth. The chief of the other qualities still to be included in ability are scientific and practical imagination of a rare and vivid kind—the one being the parent of discovery, the other the parent of application ; and a masterful knowledge which ranges, according to circumstances, from the most abstruse regions of mathematical and chemical science, to the wants of the contemporary public, the industrial potentialities of this or that place or climate, and the manner in which men of various types may be managed, with a minimum of friction, and a maximum of resulting efficiency.

Ruskin himself is very much too acute not to see from time to time the importance of these things himself. On one occasion he calls special attention to the intimate connection between wealth-production and science ; but his thought is so wanting in method that he cannot fit what he sees at intervals into any coherent system. Even energy he dismisses and disguises in the language of moral reprobation. Promptitude, method, and sense, he does indeed clearly recognise as essential to the process in which modern wealth originates ; but of the genius which animated such men—to name only a few—as Dudley, Darby of Coalbrookdale, Arkwright, Stephenson, Watt, Boulton, Bessemer, Edison, Marconi—the mechanical, mathematical, chemical, and scientific knowledge generally to which he has actually paid his own passing tribute and the practical powers of applying it—all these he ignores when he comes to sum up his conclusions ; and he puts in place of them “ want of imagination and ignorance.”

If a man like Ruskin was capable of entertaining and of promulgating views so confused, so incomplete, and so inadequate as these, we need hardly be surprised to find his admirers amongst the Labour Members adopting views of a very similar kind. But when the existence and the nature of ability, or