

plete conception of what the actual functions of labour in the modern world are, when labour is made to stand for the average majority of mankind, as opposed to and excluding all those personal forces which rise above the average, and operate through the possession of capital.

It ought to require on their part but a little education in statesmanship to show how largely they are at present misled by being the dupes of a preposterous formula. That labour, as standing for the mass of manual labourers, has interests of its own, which require some special advocacy, is a perfectly reasonable and doubtless a true proposition; but to speak of labour as the sole, or even as the most important force on which the prosperity of a civilised country such as our own depends, will, in the light of the facts on which we have just been dwelling, be recognised by any clear-headed man as childish.

That such is the case can be made easily evident by turning from the strictly economic to the political aspirations of "labour." We hear frequent boasts or prophecies that, at no very distant date, labour will be supreme in government, and that we shall be ruled by a "Labour Cabinet." Now what do such prophecies mean? Do they mean that the men who politically are at the head of affairs will be men whose main occupation will be actually manual labour? They cannot mean that, because from the necessities of the case—and facts illustrate this—as soon as a labourer betakes himself to parliamentary politics, he abandons his occupation as a manual labourer altogether, and exerts faculties which, whatever their value, are quite distinct from those by which he gained his livelihood in the workshop. Is it merely meant, then, that the members of the so-called Labour Cabinet will be men who were manual labourers at one time of their lives? And is the main implication this—that, amongst the multitudes who have been brought up as labourers there are men possessing talents of quite another kind than those which manual labour either demands or exhibits, and that quondam labourers, by