

they ought to be. He will not, he says, disguise the fact that, in order to do justice to the poor, and to place modern society on a just and a stable basis, the rich must surrender some portion of their present riches, and content themselves with a smaller influence than that which they at present exercise.

The spirit of these utterances, apart from their studied moderation, is precisely the spirit that appeals to the Labour Members of to-day. But far more important than any of his specific contentions, as influencing and representing their aims and their mode of thought, is Ruskin's attack on the science of political economy generally—a science which he denounces as no science at all—a pseudo-science which has been formulated in the interest of the rich alone, and whose so-called laws he professes to exhibit as rank delusions.

In the present article I shall examine his methods of reasoning, taken in connection with the spirit by which they are animated. And in thus approaching the intellectual condition of the spokesmen of the contemporary Labour party through the works of a writer whom they admire, rather than beginning with any utterances of their own, I shall free myself from the chance of being suspected of any unfair dealing. For Ruskin is a writer whose genius is beyond dispute. Equally beyond dispute are the nobility and integrity of his aims; and whilst many of those who have attacked the privileges of wealth may seem to have been actuated by envy of what they have been unable to gain, in Ruskin's case, at all events, no such motive was possible. He was brought up in luxury, and inherited a large fortune. Whatever attacks he may have made on wealth, under certain of its aspects, he was wholly disinterested; and his motives were those of sincere conviction.

IV

Described in general terms, the great and typical fault which Ruskin exhibits in his attack on political economy, is this. Conscious that the ordinary economists neglected certain