

priestly functions of the religion of hope and love. But the paradox of Swift was the paradox of his age; Augustan literature had lost the social with the spiritual outlook. It dreamed no dream of progress, it lifted the banner of no ideal. It despised while it depicted humanity. It was content to analyse its own present, with scorn that turned to jest or sob, according to its mood. Perhaps no phase of civilisation has ever been more deeply imbued with the conviction of its own finality. No trouble stirred it, nor was it seemingly visited by compunction, save when occasionally, of a sudden, some great soul like Swift fell into fatal despair."

As the reader turns from Swift to Ruskin it is like emerging suddenly from some dreary and chilling scene of Arctic desolation, where the ghastly, frozen bones of once active men lie stretched in grim, sad equality, into a region of summer beauty and verdure, where the myriad voices of Nature murmur hope and inspiration, and the voice of man sounds near and helpful and loving. And though, by a strange fatality, the last years of John Ruskin are, as were those of Swift, shrouded in gloom, yet the two men are essentially different, a difference which is mainly a product of their times and environments. In Swift's writings we see a potentially noble nature all turned to bitterness and waste, while in Ruskin there is that warm vitality which betokens life, enthusiasm and noble purpose. Swift is cynically depressing, Ruskin is uplifting and inspiring. It is therefore to be expected that in Scudder's chapter "What to do, according to Ruskin," we shall find propositions of a very different nature from Swift's "Modest Proposal."

The first thing to note in the social aspect of Ruskin's thought is that the constructive factor is marked and well sustained. To some, indeed, it seems too positive, finding vent in so-called Utopian vagaries. In fact Ruskin's social writings have been practically ignored hitherto by reason of their very boldness and novelty, and their author has been accused of the arrogance and over-ready assumptions of a spoiled man of genius. That there is occasional truth in such strictures may be granted; nevertheless he is being appreciated more and more every year.

Ruskin was not merely a political economist, nor was he a mere dreamer; he discovered a distinctly new field of social ethics. "He discerned that new conditions always demand the evolution of a new morality; and he pricked the lagging moral sense to keep up with the unfolding phenomena of a mercantile age." Ruskin saw clearly that no form of human activity can remain permanently immoral. "He insisted sternly that the most automatic actions of our 'business' life hold a moral factor and imply a moral ideal; and that the application of the Christian law to modern industrial society is a task which Christian folk cannot escape."

In application of these principles Ruskin made himself obnoxious to the generation of 1860 by dismissing as an *unreal* and unpleasant figment the so-called "economic man," and substituting therefor a something which had brains and heart as well as hands and stomach. He proclaimed the supreme importance, in the aim of civilization, of the production and maintenance of *men*. Witness the following from his *Essays*: "It is open to serious question, which I leave to the reader's pondering, whether, among national manufactures, that of souls of a good quality may not at last turn out a quite leadingly lucrative one?" And, "There is no Wealth but Life; life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others."

Ruskin did not stop with the proclamation of these principles in a generalized form, but went on to apply them to the industrial life he met around him. One can find this matter admirably treated in his *Essays*. Why is it, he asks in "The Roots of Honour," that in common thought an atmosphere of heroism clings about the soldier, doctor, clergyman, and none about the merchant. The answer is that the merchant is supposed to, and in general does, put the gaining of money above social service. The soldier's unselfish devotion to the service of his country rightfully demands our respect. At the present day, however, enemies of a more insidious character than our brothers over the sea are undermining our national strength, and there is a faintly recognized call for true soldiers, neither traitors nor cowards. Ruskin proceeds to indicate along what lines modern society calls for martyrdom. There is absolutely no more reason for an employer's trying to escape ruin at the expense of his employees and customers, than for an army officer to desert his men in the crisis of battle.

Thus far has been considered more particularly what might be termed Ruskin's Ethics of Production, *i.e.* the relationship of "Captains of Industry" to the national well-being, and their duties and privileges. Another phase of Ruskin's work is discussed by Mr. Scudder, *viz.*: The Ethics of Consumption. "There is another aspect in which all men are involved in the present industrial distress, and responsible for it: we are all consumers." Ruskin contends that in the presence of poverty the indulgence in luxury is criminal, and can only be enjoyed by the ignorant. Commenting on this Scudder says: "More than once he disposes briefly and pungently of the time-honored fallacy that the purchase and encouragement of luxuries relieves economic distress, and in some mysterious way is an act of social virtue." And a little farther on: "This plea for the abstention from luxury sounds strangely on the lips of the prophet of the aesthetic revival, who had done more than any one man to awaken the craving for beauty among his countrymen. Yet even Ruskin's early work, with its impassioned and manifold efforts to bring the world's loveliness into contact with men's souls, had at heart a profound longing for simplicity, a conviction that we are meant to find our joy, our peace, not in the elaboration of apparatus, but in the contemplation of nature."

Though an advocate of simplicity of life Ruskin wisely leaves it with each individual to decide for himself as to where he should draw the dividing line. He recognises that there is a point where simplicity cripples life instead of ministering to it. *He only wishes that every individual shall decide intelligently, with a clear knowledge of the cost and meaning of every action.* These principles he applies in a general way in "The Mystery of Life." "Whatever our station in life may be, at this crisis those of us who mean to fulfill our duty ought, first, to live on as little as we can, and secondly, to do all the wholesome work for it we can, and to spend all we can spare in doing all the sure good we can." This implies, according to Ruskin, good national housekeeping on the large scale, and on the smaller scale many activities illustrated in his own life, such as, for example, his efforts to promote tenement house reform. His conception of Political Economy is well described by the phrase "national housekeeping," for he considered that the mere investigation of existing facts in trade and industry, and the co-ordination of these, was, of itself and in itself, utterly barren.

The most vital factors in Ruskin's teaching in so far as it affects the individual are the extension of the moral consciousness into all relations of production and consumption, the simplification of life in the abandonment of material luxury (at least for the present), and active devotion to some form of social service. His teaching as