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A WORD ABOUT RUSKIN.

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THE name of John Ruskin should be penned with feelings of admiration and reverence by all who love truth, admire originality, appreciate beauty, and foster high intellectual and spiritual aims. There is a vast difference between the Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford and the ordinary paragraphist, who lives upon sensations and feeds his constituents with the mumbled scraps. There are many grades of individual between the extremes; hence, in the frequent discussions that eddy round the great name which heads this paper, have we been treated to many phases of Ruskinism or anti-Ruskinism, no two, like the portraits of Bret Harte, being exactly alike. We have the climax of adulation from the Æsthete, and the bathos of disingenuous and disparaging sophism from the Philistine with all intermediate shades. The truth is of course at neither extreme; but, it must be confessed, lies nearer the adulatory pole than opponents either determine or desire.

Ruskin was not perfect, yet it is safe to say that few men have ever lived with loftier aims, few men

have ever, in a certain line, done more good in and for their generation. Now that the noble artist-writer and art critic sits helpless amid the ruins of his former intellectual greatness, unheeding the plaudit of friend or the censure of foe, and certainly incapable of reply to either plaudit or reproach, it may not perhaps be out of season to speak a word of warning to those who have not been close students of Ruskin, or who may not have interested themselves in his life and work. Not to be misled and consequently prejudiced should be the aim of every earnest, conscientious, and original student and thinker. The unthinking and the young are particularly prone to be led astray by the misrepresentations of partisans or opponents. Whoever can talk the longest and loudest wins the day. Fashion is a monster whose enormities and vagaries, hideous as they are, prove insufficient to restrain certain votaries if influenced by example from prostrating themselves before her Juggernaut wheels, at whatever risk—physical or mental; discomfort or positive