

It is true that in all these cases (of determining the rate of wages), and in every conceivable case, there must be ultimate reference to the presumed difficulty of the work, or the number of candidates for the office. If we thought that the labour necessary to make a good physician would be gone through by a sufficient number of students with the prospect of only half-guinea fees, public consent would soon withdraw the unnecessary half-guinea.

This is precisely the doctrine of the despised "common" economist; and Ruskin, in thus endorsing it, completely contradicts and stultifies the challenging assertion with which he starts. He admits that the laws of the economist are so far from being wholly nugatory, that one of the most typical of them is, in an ultimate sense, true.

Let us now see how he deals with the question of the price of commodities. He begins, as usual, with an attack on writers such as Mill and Ricardo, who are for him the "common" economy personified, and, having elaborately ridiculed Mill in a fashion to which I shall refer hereafter, he turns to Ricardo, of whom he falls foul also. The exchangeable value of commodities, price being the common denominator, is, said Ricardo, "not measured by utility, though utility is absolutely essential to it." "Essential in what degree, Mr. Ricardo?" exclaims Ruskin; and he proceeds to make merry over a variety of grotesque meanings which he finds it possible to read into that writer's somewhat slovenly phraseology. The puerile character of this criticism is revealed by Ruskin himself, who ends by admitting that Ricardo meant probably none of this nonsense, but was awkwardly trying to say something which was very near the truth—"namely that, when the demand is constant, the price varies as the quantity of labour required for production." This doctrine, says Ruskin, only requires to be qualified by taking it in connection with the fact that demand, if prices varies, is *not* "ultimately constant"; "for," he proceeds, "as price rises, customers fall away."

Now, I am not here in any way concerned to inquire whether Ruskin's criticisms of the doctrines of the "common" economists with regard to the foregoing particular questions is