

truths closely associated with their subject ; conscious also that, both morally and politically, these truths were of the highest importance ; and, burning with a desire to assert them, he regarded the end which he had in view as so sacred that any argument advanced with the purpose of furthering it must be sound. The result of such a procedure in his case, as it often has been in that of others, was to make him accept his zeal as a substitute for accurate preparation, and assail the errors and inconsistencies of the thinkers whom he sought to combat, with yet greater errors and greater inconsistencies of his own.

The primary and most general accusation which he brings against ordinary political economy will afford us a preliminary and comprehensive illustration of this. The accusation in question, as I showed in the preceding article, is that political economists, deal, not with human beings as they are, but merely with an artificial abstraction. They deal with what technically they call "the economic man"—that is to say, a man who acts only in his own interest, and who identifies his own interest with commercial or pecuniary gain. But in actual life, says Ruskin, no such man exists. Human beings have selfish desires, no doubt, and a selfish desire for pecuniary gain is one of them. But this desire never acts in isolation. Though not destroyed, it is constantly modified by others, as the behaviour of one chemical substance is modified by combination with a second ; and this fact, he says, "falsifies every one of the results" reached by the calculations of the economist, and renders his whole science, as applied to practical life, "nugatory."

Now that there is much in the general accusation thus brought by Ruskin, I am the last person to deny. I have myself, in a book called "Social Equality," urged that Political Economy, as at present expounded, renders itself open to every kind of attack, by having neglected to connect itself with an examination of human nature at large. It is at present, I said, a "science with its roots in the air." Its moral and logical basis is a science which is still missing ; and this I described as "the science of human character." I explained my meaning