The Educational Philosophy of John Ruskin

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THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF JOHN RUSKIN

By

Marie Agnes Tobin

A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

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INTRODUCTION

To get an idea of John Ruskin's philosophy of education, one must comb his writings on government, natural science, art, economics, ethics, and religion. Since he looked upon education primarily as a means of rectifying all social and economic evils, we shall find his system of education bound up with life in all its aspects. Hence, I have examined Ruskin's complete works, reading intensively whatever material I thought might have a direct bearing on the subject of this thesis, reading cursorily any related material, and disregarding entirely whatever was of a technical nature, such as lectures on wood and metal engraving, perspective, principles of drawing, etc. I have attempted to classify and arrange under purely arbitrary headings Ruskin's ideas on formal education as I gleaned them a consideration of his works. The word "education" in this thesis is meant to convey the idea of formal education, unless some qualifying expression is used to give the impression of a wider meaning.

Ruskin felt that England was in a very poor way socially and economically in the middle nineteenth century. He saw that the cultivated classes despised the workers on account of their ignorance and uncouthness which had been brought about by the selfishness and greed of these culti-
vated classes. Pauperism was sapping the strength of the nation. Ruskin showed that a state is only as good as the majority of the citizens who make up that state, and hence, if England is to be saved from the results of its own neglect of the working classes, it must first develop citizens of good quality. The most effective agency for developing citizens of good quality is an educational system that will turn out men and women of good character, who are able to support themselves, and whose work is an asset to the community. Hence the educational system must be improved; the schools must adjust themselves to the needs of the community. By showing what changes were necessary in the educational system of England, Ruskin interpreted, in terms of the school, the social and economic movements of the time.

It is difficult to conjecture just how much Ruskin influenced current education since he was not a writer on educational matters as such, nor a demonstrator of educational procedure; any reference to education was incidental to some plan for improving social and civic conditions. Perhaps this incidental reference, brought in now in the midst of a lecture on architecture, or now in an article on economics appearing in a newspaper or magazine, helped to influence public opinion more than whole books or lectures devoted to a discussion of educational reforms because it reached more
people than those engaged in strictly pedagogical interests. Since the number of people who are interested in formal education is comparatively few at any time, the field of dissemination of educational propaganda is necessarily limited. As Ruskin's writings and lectures were of interest to such varied groups as artists, architects, laborers, politicians, and the religious-minded, one may assume that a thought on education, infused into a subject of interest to these groups, awakened at least a slight interest with the result that in due time, popular opinion became an active agent in improving education in general. Ruskin is to be given credit, in large degree, for awakening from their torpidity in educational matters both the classes and the masses of the latter 19th century.
CHAPTER I

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOHN RUSKIN

Since one's attitude toward life and the world about him is a composite of heredity, home influence, training, religion, and experiences of life, it is necessary to know something of the life of the philosopher in order to understand his philosophy. And because one cannot be isolated from his times, a study of the influences that brought about a definite feeling in particular matters is not complete without some mention of the spirit of the age in which the philosopher lived. It is only, then, by a consideration of the events of John Ruskin's life, viewed against the background of his times, that the value of his educational philosophy may be estimated.

John Ruskin was born of Scotch parents in London, February eighth, 1819. From his father, a well-to-do wine merchant and a man of taste and culture who loved good books and beautiful pictures, he acquired his love of beauty and of beautiful thoughts. His puritanical, strong-willed mother does not seem to have contributed any outstanding characteristic to his temperament, but it is possible that her domination of him, which did not cease even at his ma-
turity, deprived him of the opportunity to develop the sturdy, self-reliant qualities he lacked. The fact that John was an only child allowed his mother to devote her entire attention, outside of that which her household duties required, to his education, and his mother’s teaching, which was limited to the reading and explanation of the Bible, was the only instruction he received until the age of eleven when he began the study of Greek and Latin under a private tutor. To the ninety minutes after breakfast each day spent in the reading aloud from the Old and New Testament and in the memorizing of assigned parts of it, Ruskin later attributed his love of rhythmic sounds and beautiful language.

John was a precocious child—he could read and write with correct spelling at the age of four; he began to write poetry and prose at the age of seven, the compositions being plays based on his reading or accounts of the trips he took with his parents to all parts of England, Scotland, Wales and the Continent. The father’s annual trips through the countryside on which he was accompanied by his wife and small son, probably gave John his love of natural scenery, while the visits to every castle in their itinerary in order to observe whatever works of art it contained gave the boy an interest in things artistic at a very early age. These periods of travel were the only bright spots in an otherwise
gloomy, lonely, and too carefully regulated childhood. Ruskin tells us in "Traeterita" that he loved neither father nor mother and had no real affection for anyone; that his childhood was too luxurious and sheltered to allow for proper development (28:Vol. 2, 345).

When John entered Christ Church, Oxford, at the age of eighteen, his mother took rooms near him in order that she might look after the wants of her son, but even this maternal devotion could not prevent the breakdown in health, accompanied with symptoms of tuberculosis, which came when he was in his third year of attendance. Ruskin's biographers assert that this breakdown was brought about by a thwarted love affair, he, three years before, having fallen in love with the daughter of his father's business partner, Adele Domecq. Although the fathers of the young people were agreeable to the match, Mrs. Ruskin opposed it on the grounds of religious difference, the Domecqs being of the Catholic faith, and she a strict Calvinist. It is quite certain that the news of Adele's marriage to a French nobleman was a contributing factor to, if not an immediate cause of, John's ill health at this time. The consequence was that John had to leave Oxford and spend the next year and a half in an attempt to recuperate in Rome and in the Alps. His parents, who had accompanied him abroad, finding that this change of scene and
and climate was not of much avail, brought him back to England and placed him in the care of a physician at Leamington who cured him so that he was able to return to Oxford in time to receive his A. B. in May, 1842, at the age of twenty-three. With graduation came the necessity of deciding what interests he should make his life-work. He flatly refused the suggestion of his parents that he either prepare for holy orders in the Anglican church or become associated with his father in the wine business. His predominant interest at this time was in art, although he had not proved himself to be particularly gifted in the execution of graphic art despite several years instruction from the best drawing masters of the time. To the study of art and to art criticism, then, he decided to devote his time.

John Ruskin had become an ardent admirer of Turner's pictures since his father had presented him with one, several years before. However, he was almost alone in this admiration, since Turner's works were being adversely criticized in the art circles of the day. But with the propensity for advocating lost or losing causes which characterized him to the end of his life, he undertook to defend Turner's type of art expression, this defense taking the form of the first volume of "Modern Painters," written in 1843, the year after graduation. The acclaim with which this book was received en-
couraged him to go on with his writing which continued for approximately fifty years.

The winters of the years from 1843 until about 1860 Ruskins spent in studying geology in the Alps and in studying art in the galleries, churches and convents of the cities of Italy, particularly in Rome, Venice, Florence and Pisa; the summers were spent in writing his observations and ideas acquired during the previous winter's travel. His two principal works on architecture, "The Stones of Venice" and "The Seven Lamps of Architecture" were produced in this period. His study of medieval art in the Italian cities introduced him to the history of Christianity and particularly to an interest in the tenets and practices of the Catholic Church, this study leading eventually to the collapse of his old Puritan faith. In his search for the true church he attended both Catholic and Protestant services when he was on the continent, but his doubts concerning matters of dogma would not allow him to become an adherent of any established form of religious belief, with the consequence that his attitude toward different forms of religious faith constantly shifted throughout his life. When he rejected Calvinism, he became a Theist, and remained one until the later years of his life when his religious views tended toward the orthodox once more.

The next significant occurrence of Ruskin's life was his
connection with the Working Men's College in London, founded in 1854 as an outgrowth of the Chartist movement. At this point it is necessary to interrupt the continuity in the events of Ruskin's life in order to give a brief glimpse of European affairs during the middle fifty years of the nineteenth century. This was the period when nationalism was beginning to be a force, when the right to self-determination was being demanded by submerged nationalities, and freedom from autocracy was being sought by recognized nations. A national consciousness was beginning to display itself in the form of a new literature which glorified the history of the nation and depicted once again its heroes of former times. The "Young Patriot" movement representing political freedom and liberal ideas was spreading like wild fire until the monarchs of Europe trembled for their thrones and the aristocrats for their established place in society. The evils of economic life were at their worst--long hours in the factory; low wages; unhealthy living conditions both at work and at home in the crowded slums; the exploitation of labor by capital; legislation, where any existed, in favor of the capitalist; and the disfranchisement of the laboring classes in countries where there was some semblance of republican principles of government. Theories of social and economic reform were being set forth by such men as Karl Marx, John Bright,
Robert Owen, and John Stuart Mill, socialism and communism being the principal solutions offered to right the injustices of the period. Although the revolutionary movement of 1830 had been a failure, (except in a few instances) the growth of republican sentiment together with an intense economic depression in the early eighten-forties culminated in the more widespread and serious revolts of 1848. In this movement toward democracy, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, and France were successful to some degree, but Germany and Italy failed in their attempts at unification, while Hungary, Poland, Ireland, and Bohemia were utter failures in their attempts to establish independent governments.

England could not escape from the general political and social agitation on the continent, although, in general, her people were not as discontented nor in such bad straits as those of other European countries. A free press, the right of petition, a representative form of government—in theory, at least,—and the right of free speech in Parliament formed safety valves for the feelings of the English people so that there was no need for violence. Moreover, the reform bill of 1832 had enfranchised the middle classes and redistributed the country for purposes of representation, thus satisfying everyone but the factory workers and farm laborers. For these reasons the movement for political and social reform in Eng-
land was but a faint echo of the disturbances across the English Channel and took the very mild form of the Chartist movement. Although the demands of the Chartists, which can be epitomized as political equality for all British men, appear very reasonable and inoffensive today, they were considered dangerous and wildly revolutionary at that time and the entire movement was put down with a strong hand both in 1836, at its inception, and again in 1848, at its recurrence.

As a phase of the Chartist movement of 1848, or perhaps as an aftermath of the demands of the workingman for a share in matters of government which would ultimately lead to an improvement of his economic and social status, the Working Men's College was established in London with the purpose of bringing academic culture within the reach of those who were employed during the daytime. Through the influence of a friend who was interested in the establishment of this institution Ruskin became a subscriber to it and for a period of ten years lectured there and taught drawing two or three evenings a week. He considered his affiliation with the Working Men's College an opportunity to lift the masses to higher ideals and levels of accomplishment. When he resigned from the faculty he gave as his reason the fact that men trained to mechanical pursuits did not have the ability to follow his method of teaching and that their sense of beauty
had been destroyed by the "frightfulness" of modern city life.

About the year 1860, the mid-year of Ruskin's life, his dominant interests turned from art to those of social reform. Naturally this change did not take place suddenly, but was the gradual outcome of his observations, study, and connection with the Working Men's College. He says in "Praeterita" that the discussions of his father's business associates concerning their vineyards in France and Spain and

"the way in which these lords, virtually, of lands, ... though men of sense and honor; and their wives, though women of gentle and amiable disposition... spoke of their Spanish laborers and French tenantry, with no idea whatever respecting them but that, except as producers by their labor of money to be spent in Paris... gave me the first clue to the real sources of wrong in the social laws of modern Europe; and led me necessarily into the political work which has been the most earnest of my life" (28: Vol.2: 267).

Although Ruskin had been thinking deeply on the social and economic injustices of his time for many years before 1860, it was not until that year that he made his debut as a political economist with the publication of four essays in Cornhill's Magazine, now collected and known under the title of "Unto This Last." From this time also may be dated his interest in formal education (other than drawing), as he saw that the only hope for the future consisted in the education of the masses; and so we find him in this same year appearing before the Committee of the House of Commons on Public Insti-
tutions to present his plan for the education of the laboring classes.

Here it is necessary to digress in order to give a sketch of the provisions for education in England at the middle of the nineteenth century in order that Ruskin's ideas may be seen in their proper setting. England of the nineteenth century had little or no interest in the education of the masses. Those who belonged to the upper classes sent their sons to the "public schools" (which would be called private in America) such as Eton, Rugby, and Harrow, and to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. They were not concerned with the education of the sons of those on whom fortune had looked less favorably. As for the poorer members of society, their concern for the education of their offspring was of no avail since they were not in a position to remedy their own condition or that of their children. Often they depended on the wages of their children to supplement their own in order to buy the bare necessities of food, clothing, and shelter for the family, so that there was no time for attendance at school, even if the school was available. Schools for the poor were conducted by private organizations, such as the "National Society for the Education of the Poor in Principles of the Church of England" which supported most of them, or by private individuals. In spite of the fact that Parliament,
since 1833, had been making grants of money to the schools founded and conducted by these voluntary societies and had been supervising the instruction carried on in them, the number and caliber of these schools was far from adequate. A citation of the numbers of pupils deprived of the opportunity to attend schools because of their scarcity as late as 1870 gives an idea of the seriousness of the situation.

"In Manchester 16,000 out of 65,000 children had no schools to which they might go; in Liverpool out of 80,000 children, 40,000 went to government aided schools, 20,000 went to schools which were so low in their standards that they could not qualify for government aid, and 20,000 had no schools at all. In the country as a whole 2,000,000 children out of 4,300,000 of school age were not in school and, of the rest, 1,000,000 were in schools which could not qualify for state aid" (4:541).

With the passage of the Factory Act of 1833, prohibiting the employment of children under nine years of age in any factory, came an increase in the number of prospective pupils without a corresponding increase in the number of schools.

But besides the inadequacy of the number of schools for the children of the working classes there was also inadequacy of instruction. The mastery of reading, writing, and ciphering to a fair degree together with the inculcation of the principles of religion was considered sufficient for the demands of a child who was a member of the inferior class and who was supposed to remain in that position. In the face of
this general aristocratic attitude toward the education of the masses, Ruskin advocated the enrichment of this meager course of study by the addition of such cultural subjects as music, drawing, history, and nature study as well as of the more practical training for vocation which at that time for the laboring classes meant the trades.

Coming back to the account of Ruskin's life, we find him advocating social and moral reform for the last forty years of his life by means of lectures and articles contributed to the periodicals of the time. However he was not contented with urging others to act in bettering the conditions of the working classes; he took an active part in the movement by organizing and sponsoring the St. George's Guild Company for the purpose of inducing the workingmen of Great Britain to forsake the congested city for agricultural pursuits. In an effort to break away from the commercialism which he believed to be one of the causes of poverty and crime, Ruskin, in 1871, initiated the plan of an ideal community where the workers might also be the capitalists. According to his plans, those who had been out of employment in the cities might help to reclaim waste lands in the neighborhood of Walkly (on the outskirts of Sheffield) where they might build homes and engage in healthful work. Each member was to be required to do some work for which he was fitted,
but the labor was to be cooperative, not competitive. Obedience to the laws of the Guild was to be demanded from all members as well as acknowledgement of some form of religious belief. One-tenth of each one's income was to be subscribed to a common fund for the purpose of buying the land for the community and Ruskin set the example by contributing one-tenth of the money he had at the time, this contribution amounting to seven thousand pounds. The failure of the plan may be judged from the fact that after three years of propaganda only two hundred and thirty-six pounds, besides Ruskin's amount, had been subscribed. Of course the project was impractical, fantastic, and even silly in many of its details such as in the requirement that only uncut jewels might be worn, or that no wine should be drunk that was not at least ten years old, or that a particular type of dress should be worn to indicate the social position of the wearer (1:174), but it was productive of some good inasmuch as it was in connection with his plans for the St. George's Guild schools that Ruskin did most of his serious thinking about formal education. Moreover, John Ruskin was not the only one of his contemporaries who spent their fortunes and their talents in attempts to build up "Utopias." Robert Owen, an English manufacturer, founded communistic settlements in the United States, one of which was the community at New Harmony,
Indiana. In France and in the United States, under the influence of the socialists Saint-Simon and Fourier, many settlements were made by men and women who surrendered their private property to build up ideal communities, all of which were failures. And so this semi-communistic plan of Ruskin's was in the spirit of the age, and it too, like the others, was a failure, the Museum at Sheffield being the only tangible record of its existence.

In 1870 Ruskin was elected to the professorship of art at Oxford University, a position he filled for nine successive years. When he was re-elected as art professor again in 1883 he retained the place for only one year since failing health forced him to resign. There is also a possibility that the passage of a vote to endow a physiological laboratory which would entail vivisection, a practice to which Ruskin was opposed, may have had some influence on his resignation also. It was Ruskin's duty, as art professor, to give twelve lectures a year on art. These lectures, which brought in morals, religion, sociology, history, and any other subjects that were foremost in the author's mind at the time, are compiled under the titles, "Lectures on Art," "The Eagle's Nest," "Ariadne Florentine," "Love's Meinie," "Val d'Arno," "The Art of England," and "The Pleasures of England." But other activities besides those which his duties required were carried on by
Ruskin during his connection with Oxford as a teacher, among them being the inauguration and endowment of a school for drawing at Oxford and the starting of a museum of art there with his own gifts of pictures, casts and engravings.

And now another emotional disturbance helped to bring on the mental breakdown from which Ruskin recovered only for periods at a time thereafter. A young lady who had refused Ruskin's offer of marriage because of his unorthodox religious beliefs, and with whom he was very much in love, died in 1875, when he was fifty-six years old. The shock of her death on a nervous system that was always delicate, together with overwork, brought about his first attack of brain fever. From 1878, then, when the first attack took place, much of what Ruskin wrote is unreliable and at times borders on the irrational and childish, on account of these recurring mental disturbances.

In the meantime, Ruskin's father had died in 1864, and his mother in 1871. It was his good fortune to be cared for during the remaining years of his life by his cousin, Joanna Severn, and her family who came to live at Brantwood, an estate in the lake region of England, bought by Ruskin upon the death of his mother. During this period of retirement he continued to write, producing some of the ninety-six letters of "Fors Clavigera" in which his plans for the St. George's
Guild are set forth, and also "Praeterita," his fascinating autobiography, which was never completed and the last addition to which was made in 1899, one year before his death.

Among the influences that were most impressive in Ruskin's life were his parents, his father cultivating in him a love of art and nature, and his mother an intense religious feeling. Companionship only with his parents and adult relatives when he was a child was instrumental in contributing to his serious-mindedness while his delicate health and many disappointing experiences were contributory to the despondency and depression of which he was very often a victim.

To his travels on the continent Ruskin attributes much of his knowledge since his study of history, both religious and profane, began with his study of Italian medieval art in the cities of Italy. He tells us that Rouen, Geneva, and Pisa were centers of thought and teaching to him, and that Verona had given color to all they taught (23:Vol.2; 204). His first serious reading, that which led him into fruitful thought and made him a useful teacher instead of a vain laborer was done, he says, during the winter of 1845 while he was sojourning in the Alps (23:Vol.2; 196). Ruskin gave no credit to his Oxford education for having contributed anything to his life. In fact, he considered the time spent at Oxford wasted and tells us of his recovered sense of freedom on leaving the institu-
tion (28: Vol. 2; 107). His delicate nervous system seems to have been tortured by competitive examinations and systematic study, an experience which possibly colored his attitude toward the higher education of his day.

And, last of all, to the spirit of reform which belonged to the nineteenth century, -- reform in education, in politics, in social welfare -- may be attributed Ruskin's identification with a movement that could not pass unnoticed by one in whom emotion was a dominant force, thus numbering him among the great humanitarians of the time.
CHAPTER II

RUSKIN'S CRITICISM OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATION

"Ye melancholy chambers! I could shun
The darkness of your silence, with such fear,
As places where slow murder had been done.
How many noble spirits have died here,
Withering away in yearnings to aspire,
Gnawed by mocked hope, - devoured by their own fire!
Methinks the grave must feel a colder bed
To spirits such as these, than unto common dead"

(27:16).

The stanza quoted above, taken from a poem by John Ruskin entitled, "Christ Church, Oxford -- Night," strikes the keynote of its author's attitude toward the education of his day--the classical education of the nineteenth century; the education that prepared one for the professions, or as expressed in another way, the education which prepared one to be a true gentleman and a scholar. To those who know John Ruskin only as the lover of books, the lecturer on art, the preacher of morals, the student of history, this attitude may be somewhat hard to understand, coming, as it does, from the type of mind we should expect to take kindly to an education made up in great part of the classics. On the other hand, to those who know John Ruskin as a writer on economic and social problems of his day--and there were many of them,
for the industrial revolution during his time was playing havoc with the established order of things—this revolt against an education which does not prepare men to take an active part in the affairs of life is not at all surprising. To one who was interested in helping the individual to adapt himself to his environment, education could be considered only as a utility, not as an ornament. Many of Ruskin's criticisms, therefore, were directed against the omission of practical subjects from the courses of study in the schools of his time.

He spoke very often about the neglect of subjects which might be of practical value and about over-emphasis on the classics. While the best processes of education may be disputed, he said, it could hardly be disputed that every man should enter his life work equipped with the following information:

1. Where he is, or a study of the world, "what it is made of and what may be made of it" (32:447).

2. Where he is going, or matters pertaining to a life beyond the present: "whether he should consult the Bible, the Koran, or the Council of Trent" (32:447).

3. What he had best to do under the circumstances, or the kind of faculties he has, his place in
society, the present condition and needs of mankind, and the best way he can attain and diffuse happiness (32:447).

"The man who knows these things, and who has had his will so subdued in the learning of them that he is ready to do what he knows he ought, I should call educated; and the man who knows them not, uneducated, though he could talk all the tongues of Babel" (32:447).

In other words, Ruskin did not believe that erudition and education were synonymous terms. The training for active, intelligent participation in everyday affairs he considered to be of more value than the study of subjects that might never be brought into practical use.

The contemporary European system of education was criticized by Ruskin for its omission of:

1. Natural history. This was a serious mistake, in his opinion, because one will find fifty men who are fitted for the study of things to one man who is fitted for the study of words.

2. Religion—not as a science, but as training in the service of God.

3. Politics—the science of the relations and duties of men to one another—the nature of wealth and its circulation, the proper relations of rich and
poor, and other problems of political economy, as he explained (29:216-17).

Evidently, these were the subjects that Ruskin felt would prepare students for an understanding of their environment, in a political sense as citizens of a modern state, in a geographical sense as inhabitants of the earth, and in a religious sense as creatures who have duties to God and to their fellowmen.

Ruskin complained because the people of Europe were impressed with the erroneous idea that a person was well-educated if he could read Greek and write Latin verses and because the objective of education was considered to be the general discipline of the intellectual powers which a study of the classical subjects was presumed to give (29:215). He denied that Latin and Greek grammar was the essence of culture or that Latin and Greek studies were the only effective agencies for disciplining the mind. Any study that might be put to practical value he believed to be just as useful for this purpose (29:215). It is interesting to note that Ruskin believed not so much in disciplining the intellect as in disciplining the emotions. In fact, he neglected the purely intellectual side of education and stressed the training of the emotions. He believed that an attitude of kindliness was of more value than an accumulation of book knowledge.
On many occasions the superficiality of contemporary education was attacked by Ruskin. Referring to college education as he knew it, he said that it had given bad taste, not only in art, but in everything. "It has given fastidiousness of choice without judgment, superciliousness of manner without dignity, refinement of habit without purity, grace of expression without sincerity, and desire of loveliness without love" (32:194). This passage is strikingly like the definition of a gentleman of his day given by a contemporary of Ruskin, Cardinal Newman, when he said that one was considered a gentleman if he had a polished, graceful, and gracious exterior, little or no attention being given to sincerity, or stability of character, or Christian ethics that should be the foundation of polite accomplishments.¹

Continuing with the criticism of superficiality, Ruskin maintained that the main thing we ought to teach our youth is to see something rather than to say something.

"As far as I have experience of instruction, no man ever dreams of teaching a boy to get to the root of a matter; to think it out; to get quit of passion and desire in the process of thinking. . . . But to say anything in a glib and graceful manner; to give an epigrammatic turn to nothing" (25:Vol.2; 429).

Ruskin, being of the emotional type himself, probably realized that one who has not learned to control his emotions is at a disadvantage in many ways. Probably for this reason he urged more training in reasoning and less in the type of oratory that is designed to appeal to the feelings alone. How he would have been delighted with the thought-provoking and judgment questions that he might find in use in classrooms today!

Another practice to which Ruskin objected very forcibly was that of requiring every one to learn the same subjects. He had two reasons for this objection: one was that he recognized differences in aptitudes and abilities; and the other was that he wished to maintain the "status quo" of the social strata. Since he was a thorough aristocrat, Ruskin sanctioned class distinctions. He was much opposed to the ambition that makes one want to improve his social position or to accumulate wealth. Pupils were to be trained to be content in the station of life into which they were born, and for that reason they were not to be given the kind of education which would make them discontented with following the occupation of their father, or the kind which would make them spurn hard labor (31:67).

"The idea of a general education which is to fit everybody to be Emperor of Russia and provoke a boy, whatever he is, to want to be something
better . . . is the most entirely diabolic of all the countless stupidities into which the British nation has been of late betrayed by its avarice and irreligion" (23:Vol.4; 379).

The quotation just given was written by Ruskin about 1879, nine years after the passage of the education bill providing for a public system of education in England. He wrote it not because he objected to having every child receive an education, but because he objected to every child receiving the same kind of education. He recognized that certain elements of education were necessary for every one, such as obedience, cleanliness, the first laws of music, mechanics and geometry, the primary facts of geography and astronomy, and the outlines of history, but aside from these habits and bodies of knowledge, he thought that schools should teach subjects adapted to the circumstances of the children they were teaching (23:Vol.4; 379). In this way class distinctions would be kept intact and the greatest happiness to the individual would result, because happiness, in Ruskin's estimation, comes only through contentment which cannot exist where there is either social or economic striving. We of today, at least we Americans, consider this plan of a different type of education for each social level undemocratic. However, Europeans, are not averse to this plan and we know that France and Germany, and to some extent England, practice
this stratification of education.

Reviewing the points of contemporary education that Ruskin looked upon with disfavor, then, we find that he objected to the superficiality of current education, to the idea of a general education expected to fit every one for the same condition of life, to the "disciplinary" theory, and to the prevalence of subjects in the course of study which have no direct value for the pupil.
CHAPTER III

THE OBJECTIVES OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO RUSKIN

Stating what is wrong with a system does not help to remedy it unless some constructive criticisms are given, but before one can formulate constructive policies he must have definite aims in mind as to what he wishes to accomplish. In the field of education the aim is the "open sesame" to an understanding of any philosophy of education, and from it the curriculum and the method are derived. The Spartans wished to develop a nation of soldiers; with this end in view, the emphasis in Spartan education was put on physical training, the development of courage, and strict obedience to laws. The Chinese wished to perpetuate their ancient practices and customs; for that reason they stressed in the education of their children the memorizing of their ancient precepts. The Athenians wished to prepare their children for active citizenship in a democratic state and for the proper enjoyment of leisure time; to accomplish this aim they gave attention to the cultural and moral side of education, as well as to the physical side.

On the general objective of education, then, is erected the entire educational structure, and this objective, with
Ruskin, was the development of character. All subjects studied, all virtues inculcated or developed, all activities of the child were to be directed primarily toward the attainment of this end, namely, the development of "souls of good quality."

"Over and over again he said to us that a well-built character was the greatest of all human treasures; and that the supreme question for all of us was not 'what do we possess?' but 'what do our possessions do for us?', not 'how much they have cost us?' but 'how do they benefit others?'" (10:77).

But the expression "development of character" is too indefinite and capable of too many interpretations to allow its use as a workable aim in education. In order to get results, one must have specific objectives on which to focus his work. The term "character" must be analyzed with a view to finding out the qualities that go into the making of a good character, and each of these component parts must be used as a separate objective. If we are to understand Ruskin's conception of the word "character," we must find out the qualities that he considered as integral parts of his ideal creature.

Truthfulness. -- Probably the quality that Ruskin mentions oftenest is that of the habit of truthfulness; his emphasis on it as an attribute of an integrated character is ever-recurring. All book knowledge was to be subordinated to the cultivation of this virtue, which was to be taught to
the child by precept and by example. If individuals are to make anything of themselves they must cultivate a respect for truth, and toward this end the pupil must be trained from his early childhood to observe carefully and to give an accurate account of his observations. The love and practice of truthfulness, according to Ruskin, was a virtue that was lacking to society as a whole. He states in "Giotto and His Works in Padua":

"Of all the virtues commonly found in the higher orders of human mind, that of a stern and just respect for truth seems to be rarest; . . . . Self-denial, courage, charity, religious zeal are displayed by myriads, but only once in a century appears a man whose word can be trusted --not colored by prejudice or bias" (25:Vol.3; 19).

Humility. -- Next to truth, humility is perhaps the quality admired most by Ruskin. He says that he believes the first test of a truly great man is his humility (not the doubt of his own power, but the right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say and the rest of the world's doings and sayings). Humility consists in feeling that greatness is not in one's self but through one's self as an instrument of God. The slightest manifestation of jealousy or self-complacency is enough to stamp one as a person of second-rate intellect (25:Vol.3; 284-85). Lack of humility or pride has caused the downfall of nations, of men, and of movements, Ruskin believes. "I have been more and more convinced, the
more I think of it, that, in general, pride is at the bottom of all great mistakes" (25:Vol.4; 61). If "pride is indeed the first and last among the sins of men" (31:66), the regeneration of men is to be brought about by the substitution of humility for pride, and to this end the child is to be taught this virtue from his earliest years.

Right Conduct. -- Moral education always took precedence over the intellectual with Ruskin. He believed that right conduct was of infinitely more value than an accumulation of book knowledge, and that the function of education was to build up high ideals of conduct which were to be made habitual through constant practice. In referring to the education of children in the St. George's Guild Community, Ruskin states:

"All education must be moral first, intellectual secondarily. . . . Moral education begins in making the creature to be educated clean and obedient. This must be done at any cost, and with any kind of compulsion rendered necessary by the nature and extent of its own capacities; . . . Intellectual education consists in giving the creature the faculties of admiration, hope and love. These are to be taught by the study of beautiful Nature; the sight and history of noble persons; and the setting forth of noble objects of action" (23:Vol.3; 250-51).

Teaching a knowledge of ethical conduct in a given situation was by no means sufficient. That knowledge was to be transformed into right conduct until it became second nature to the child.
Spiritual quality. -- Ruskin wished the child to be freed from what he considered the leading vice of his age, that is, the predominance of a mercenary and commercial spirit and a corresponding and consequent lowness of all ideals of life. He wished to counteract the desire for accumulation of worldly possessions by showing that there was another side to man's nature besides that which could be satisfied with the things money could buy. The development of the spiritual man was as important as the development of the physical man. In fact, there could be no approximation to perfection without a highly developed spiritual quality. Because of a lack of this quality Ruskin condemns the Dutch school of painting. That the work produced by it is mechanically good, he admits, but its insensitiveness prevents it from being considered good art. He characterizes Teniers, Wouvermans, and Berghen (Dutch artists) as insensitive and unspiritual; therefore they are producing the lowest phase of art of a skillful kind. To Wouvermans, in particular, he directs his criticism by saying that he shows no gleam of higher hope, thought, beauty, or passion ("Giotto and His Works in Padua," in 25:Vol.3; 302-04).

Love of God. -- The fostering of a love and appreciation for God was a fundamental aim of Ruskin. Since he was of a deeply religious nature himself, one cannot conceive of a
scheme of education advanced by him with God left out of it. In fact, Ruskin's desire to spread a knowledge of God and His works has caused him to be called by one of his critics "as notable a missionary as ever lived" (10:89). Because he felt that lack of faith in God was one of the weaknesses of his age, he wished the school to be the instrument of restoring that faith, thereby providing more happiness for individuals and greater strength for the nation (25:Vol.3; 288-92). Very often Ruskin hurls his wrath against those people who practice religion only on Sunday and who live the rest of the week as if there were no God. To counteract this failure to make a consciousness of God a part of one's everyday life, Ruskin would provide for the teaching of a love of nature and of the Author of Nature in the schools.

Other Qualities. -- A cheerful spirit, contentment with one's lot, and sympathy and charity for all creatures were other qualities that went into the making of a good character, according to Ruskin. He wrote that reading and writing are in no sense education unless they contribute to the end of making us feel kindly toward all creatures (21:194). Reverence for constituted authority and strict obedience to those placed in position over us by an all-wise Providence were the foundation stones on which all education was to be built up.

Giotto, perhaps more than any other person for whom
Ruskin expresses admiration, may be said to be a composite of many excellent qualities of character which Ruskin would try to develop in everyone. He tells us that Giotto's mind was one of the most healthy, kind, and active that ever informed a human frame; that he had a great love of beauty and a love of truth; that he was of serene temper, of firm faith, and of exhaustless imagination; that he was industrious, that he was constant and accurate in his workmanship ("Giotto and His Works in Padua," 25:Vol.3; 13). Moral qualities appealed to Ruskin a great deal more than did skill or erudition, and for this reason they occupied the greater and more important part in his plan of education. It is interesting to note that when he lists the characteristics of a gentleman in "Giotto and His Works in Padua" he dismisses the physical and intellectual attributes with a word, but he goes into detail concerning the moral attributes:

Fineness of structure of body and mind--the body to be capable of delicate sensations; the mind to be capable of delicate sympathies.

Sensitiveness

Kindness and mercifulness

Sympathy

Reserve

Self-Command
Truthfulness

Courage

Although the development of the qualities mentioned thus far predominate in Ruskin's educational plan because they contribute to the development of character, there are other objectives of great importance also.

Vocation. -- Ruskin's interest in providing vocational education for every boy grew out of his studies in political economy. He wished to do away with the poverty and unemployment that resulted from the fact that large numbers, in fact the majority, of boys and men in the lower and lower-middle classes in England had no particular training for any kind of work. The best way to eradicate this evil condition was to provide instruction in a trade to every boy while he was still at school. Ruskin stated that the purposes of an education are to promote good moral habits, to develop bodily strength and mental qualities as far as possible, and to provide information on the technical problems of a particular calling (29:222). But Ruskin would go a step farther in vocational education than making provision for it in the curriculum of the common schools; he would establish government schools for men and boys where they might receive instruction in the line of work for which they showed greatest aptitude, the choice being limited, of course, to the kind of work known as
trades. It was Ruskin's theory that if every boy, on leaving school, was fitted for a particular kind of work, he would readily find his place in the economic order, with the maximum of happiness for himself and the minimum of trouble for the state.

The girls were also to be trained in school for the only vocation recognized for them by Ruskin, that of housewife. The education of a girl should prepare her to be a helpmate to her husband and should enable her to run his household with efficiency. She must not think of honor or distinction for herself; she must learn only that she may become a proper companion for her husband (29:59).

**Physical Strength.** -- Whenever Ruskin set forth his plan for a system of education, he included the development of bodily health and strength, and he did this at a time when there was no provision made in the common schools of England for either formal or informal physical education. He did not favor formal gymnastics, perhaps because they savored too much of systematization, but he did advocate the playing of athletic games on the school grounds as part of the school work. He wished to acquire for the boy of common stock the same opportunities for physical development and play that the boys of Eton and Harrow enjoyed.

**Good Citizenship.** -- Good citizenship, with Ruskin, did
not have the same connotation in all respects that we attach to the term today. He believed that the average man was neither interested in, nor capable of taking an active part in politics. The work of government was to be left to those specially trained for it or to those whose leisure gave them ample time to devote to it. But Ruskin considered anyone a good citizen who made an adequate living for himself and his family, who gave no trouble to the state, who obeyed the laws, who was content with his lot and made the most of it, and who contributed to the welfare of the state by his labor, thereby making himself of use to the other members of society. Pupils were to be taught, then, to be satisfied with their places in society, the habit of obedience, and a form of labor that would be useful to others. A person who acquired these accomplishments together with a good character would be considered an ideal citizen by Ruskin.

Use of Leisure Time. -- Ruskin believed that play is a serious matter because it is necessary to produce healthy work. The kind of work one does is fixed for him by necessity or authority, but a choice of recreation is left to himself. Therefore it is probable that the greater evil comes from a mistaken choice of play than from engaging in a kind of work not suited to an individual (31; Vol. 3; 127). Children should be taught to make proper use of their leisure time by engaging
in athletic games, by reading good literature, by showing an interest in music and art, and by studying and exploring the beauties of nature.

**Development of Good Taste.** -- Since so much of Ruskin's life was devoted to lecturing and writing on the appreciation of literature, nature, architecture, and painting, one should expect the development of good taste to occupy an important place in any system of education devised by him. Perhaps no one has expressed Ruskin's desire to teach good taste in all things better than Spielman, who tells us that Ruskin's conception of the end and aim of life was beauty in all things, actual, aesthetic, moral, and ethical (36:34). However, he wished good taste to be cultivated not for its own sake, but because of the favorable influence he believed it to exert on the entire personality. "What we like determines what we are, and is the sign of what we are; and to teach taste is inevitably to form character" (19:84). At another time he said, "Tell me what you like and I'll tell you what you are" (19:81). Ruskin would teach art, not to make artists, but to make better men; he would teach music, not to make musicians, but to aid persons to express their emotions in a finer way; he would teach nature, not to accumulate facts about nature, but to lead through nature to God.

Perhaps one may sum up Ruskin's philosophy of education
by saying that he wished to develop good taste mentally, morally, and physically.

"The entire object of true education is to make people not merely do the right things, but to enjoy the right things ... not merely industrious, but to love industry ... not merely learned, but to love knowledge ... not merely pure but to love purity ... not merely just but to hunger and thirst after justice" (19:83).

In summarizing Ruskin's objectives of education, we may say that the development of good character was his general and most important aim. Everything else was subservient to this attribute whose fundamental principles he considered to be piety, sincerity, and honesty. Ruskin's view of the function of education was, "You do not educate a man by telling him what he knew not, but by making him what he was not" (41:42).

Two of Ruskin's objectives, namely, vocation and the development of physical strength, sound trite today, but we must remember that they were innovations when Ruskin was urging their adoption in the schools of England seventy-five years ago. His recognition of the need of good citizenship and the proper use of leisure time grew out of his interest in matters of social reform, while the development of good taste arose from his interest in art. He did not stress the acquisition of bodies of knowledge or the development of skill in the fundamental processes because those matters were al-
ready a well-established part of the curriculum. What Rus­
kin wished to do was to stir up the people at large to a
realization of the fact that reading, writing, and arithmetic
were not sufficient to turn out an educated man or woman.
He defined an educated man as "one who has an understand­
ing of his own uses and duties in the world and therefore of the
general nature of things done and existing in the world; and
who has so trained himself or been trained, as to turn to the
best and most courteous account whatever faculties or know­
ledge he possesses" (31:43).
CHAPTER IV

THE CONTENT OF EDUCATION ACCORDING TO RUSKIN

Given the objectives of education, the next step in a plan of education is the determination of the subject matter that will best develop these objectives. Very little detail on the subject matter that was to go into the curriculum can be found in Ruskin's writings. A bare mention of the subject itself is all one finds with the exceptions of arithmetic, religion, nature study, history, geography, and vocational training, and even with respect to these subjects the information he gives is meager and incidental to some other subject of discussion. Ruskin abandons his usual dogmatism and minuteness of detail in the field indicated by the title of this chapter, and gives instead suggestion and inspiration. He enumerated the following as the necessary elements of a good public system of education:

1. Laws of health and physical exercises designed to develop the body.
2. Reverence and compassion. The best way to develop reverence is to supply good teachers whom the youth will respect, by teaching what is best in human deeds from past history, and by making
the pupil feel the smallness of his own powers compared with the attainments of others. The best way to develop compassion is to make it a point of honor to be kind to weaker creatures—to make compassion collateral with courage and to stigmatize the infliction of pain on weaker creatures.

3. The habit of truth. This is the principal work of the teacher and it is to be done by insisting on close accuracy in language, observation, and thought.

4. Natural science and mathematics (32:67-70). Why Ruskin felt it necessary to separate numbers two and three above, which might be combined into one group under the head of character education, he did not explain. The other subjects that he mentioned all through his suggestions on education, that is, drawing, music, history, and vocational training, he probably would group around these elements in such a way as to vary in amount and kind with the need of the class of pupils taught.

Ruskin would have three types of schools with curricula varying with the geographical location. In schools established for country children he would have the natural history of birds, of insects and of plants, together with agriculture,
as the core of the curriculum. In schools established on the seacoast physical geography, astronomy, and the natural history of sea fish and sea birds would be the main subjects taught (32:70). Schools located in the city would stress the study of mathematics and of art. Obviously, this plan arose from its author's effort to fit each one for his own environment. It is based upon the assumption that every man was to take up the occupation of his father and to stay in the environment into which he was born. To those of us who believe that each individual should be allowed to choose his own vocation, the idea of shunting a child into a particular life work before he has had a chance to choose for himself appears to be undemocratic. However, since it is unfair to judge one age or country by the standards of another, one may consider this plan of Ruskin's to be an honest effort on his part to fit the individual to a place in society where he might function most efficiently. Like so many writers before him he gave more emphasis to society and less to the individual.

When Ruskin, in making arrangements for the St. George's Guild undertaking, attempted to put his ideas on education into operation, he provided for two types of schools--agricultural schools to be established inland, and naval schools to be established near the sea. The boys who attended these
schools had to learn either to ride or to sail, depending on the type of school they were attending; the girls had to learn to spin, weave, sew, and cook. Both sexes were to be taught dancing, vocal music in daily class lessons, geometry, Latin, and the natural history of the place in which they lived. Their study of history was to consist in learning the names and deeds of heroes and heroines of the five cities of London, Venice, Florence, Rome, and Athens (23:Vol.1; 110-21). Pupils who showed aptitude for art and further history were to be allowed to study them, but these subjects were not to be required of all pupils. However, since the Guild was never realized, the plans were not given a trial.

With reference to history, Ruskin pleaded for teaching pupils modern rather than ancient history. He did not wish to disregard the ancient history entirely, for he recommended the study of Rome and Athens. He simply wished a change of emphasis from the ancient to the modern. He felt that the student of his day when he was taught history at all was instructed more about ancient institutions than he was about his own and he realized the importance of having the pupil understand his own environment. The other three cities, knowledge of which he considered necessary for a well rounded course in history, were London, Venice, and Florence. He chose London because he said it represented Christian chiv-
alry, philosophy, and Gothic architecture; he chose Venice and Florence because they represented the Christian arts of music, sculpture, and painting; he chose the study of Athens because it represented Greek religion and arts; and that of Rome because it represented the victory of Christ over paganism (26:7).

Ruskin would have religion taught both directly and indirectly: directly, through the reading and memorizing of passages from the Bible; indirectly, through the study of noble persons who had trusted in a Supreme Spirit, and through the study of nature leading to a realization of the greatness of God (23:Vol.3; 251).

That nature study was omitted from the schools and colleges of his day was bemoaned by Ruskin in England as well as by Emmerson in the United States. Ruskin even went so far as to assert that the schools destroyed a love of nature. "The whole force of education until very lately has been directed in every possible way to the destruction of the love of nature" (33:3386). As mentioned before in connection with the study of religion, the study of natural science was not to be pursued as an end in itself, but only as a means of teaching ethics and religion. "Supposing all circumstances otherwise the same with respect to two individuals, the one who loves nature most will always be found to have more faith
in God than the others" (33:60).

According to Ruskin, the schools of his time gave too much attention to the study of arithmetic. He maintained that pupils were trained as if every boy were to be a banker's clerk and every woman simply a check on the cook's accounts. He would teach only what was necessary in arithmetic, and he considered that to be the part which treats of money transactions.

Geography would be made a strictly scientific subject by Ruskin. He would not teach the manners or customs of a people nor the habitat of the countries, but simply geographic facts and their related geology (23:Vol.4; 387). Today we realize that human interests are primary interests and that they are the best means of leading pupils to the study of the facts of geography, and at least one writer of a geography text book has recognized that fact by incorporating the word "human" in the title of his book.¹

That vocational training was an intrinsic part of Ruskin's educational scheme is attested to by the following statement: "No teacher can truly promote the cause of education until he knows the conditions of the life for which

that education is to prepare his pupils" (19:30). Every school under his guidance was to have workshops—as many as possible—but at least two, where carpentry and pottery might be taught. In addition to the workshops, each school was to have a garden and arable land around it where the pupils were to be taught and employed in the cultivation of the soil (23: Vol. 4; 369). Ruskin advocated training schools for youth at government expense and under government supervision where every child was to be permitted to go and, in some cases, required to attend. For these schools he suggested the teaching of:

1. Laws of health, and exercises for promoting health.
2. Habits of gentleness and justice.
3. The calling by which the pupils were to earn their living.

In connection with these schools there would be workshops under government regulation for the production and sale of useful articles. Adults as well as children were to be allowed to attend these trade schools (18:144-45).

Like Pestalozzi, Ruskin believed that providing every one with the means of earning a living was the greatest crime deterrent as well as the greatest contribution to personal happiness; hence his insistence on preparing every one for a
remunerative occupation.

By urging and planning vocational training in the schools, Ruskin was trying to break away from the formal book-learning of doubtful practical value and to substitute for it a study that would function in the daily life of the pupil. He tried to lift manual labor to the plane of clerical and professional work by giving it a place in the schools along with Latin and the sciences. In fact he maintained that every youth, no matter what his station in life, should learn a trade thoroughly because his viewpoint would be enlarged by his ability to do something well with his hands (24:90).

This is the same idea that put the shop work into our present day schools and the study of vocations into the curriculum of our high schools, that is, the hope that the pupil may appreciate the work of others and thereby widen his interests and his views.

When he was asked what subjects he would recommend for girls, Ruskin answered that the girls ought to study the same subjects as the boys study, but with a different spirit.

"A woman in any rank of life ought to know whatever her husband is likely to know, but to know it in a different way. His command of it should be fundamental and progressive, hers general and accomplished for daily and helpful use" (29:64).

And again, "Speaking broadly, a man ought to know any lan-
or science thoroughly, while a woman ought to know the same language or science only so far as may enable her to sympathize in her husband's pleasures and in those of his friends" (29:64-65).

Assuming that the prime object of a girl's education was to fit herself to be a suitable companion to her husband, Ruskin told what training he would give her to prepare her for her place in life. First, he would give her physical training and exercise to confirm her health and beauty (29:62); then he would "fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice and refine its natural tact of love" (29:62).

"All such knowledge should be given her as may enable her to understand, and even to aid, the work of men; and yet it should be given, not as knowledge—not as if it were, or could be for her an object to know; but only to feel, and to judge. It is of no moment as a matter of pride or perfectness in herself whether she knows many languages or one; but it is of the utmost that she should be able to show kindness to a stranger" (29:62).

Ruskin wished to emphasize the training of the tastes and emotions of the girl and to give her only so much knowledge as would be a means toward this end. Evidently he would not sanction co-education.

Ruskin's failure to mention reading and writing in his constructive criticisms pertaining to curricular material
may be noticed by the reader. He stated that it was his purpose "to educate the children entrusted to their (St. George's Guild) schools in practical arts and patient obedience; but not at all necessarily in either arithmetic, writing, or reading" (23:Vol.1; 229). The reasons for this seeming neglect of these subjects is due to the fact that they were practically the only ones firmly entrenched in the English common schools until about the year 1875. Under the Revised Code of 1862, the three R's were the only subjects required, with the addition of needlework for girls. Since each school was to receive a grant of money from the government in proportion to the number of pupils who could pass successfully the annual government examinations in those three subjects, the pupils were kept grinding at reading, writing, and arithmetic in order to insure success in the examinations. The Annual Report of 1865 states that the Code of 1862 "has led to more uniform progress in Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic ... (but) it has tended, at least temporarily, to discourage attention to the higher branches of elementary instruction—Geography, Grammar, and History." 2 Ruskin wished to startle

public opinion out of complacency in its belief that the three R's constituted an education for the poorer classes by outlining a plan of education with reading, writing, and arithmetic left out.

By emphasizing the value of health education, natural science, history, geography, music, drawing, vocational training for girls and boys, and the virtues necessary to inculcate or develop good character, Ruskin called attention to the fact that getting or giving an education is a many-sided process, and attains its objective only when it develops the pupil to the fullest extent that his physical, mental, and moral powers will permit.
CHAPTER V

METHOD IN EDUCATION ACCORDING TO RUSKIN

Although the nineteenth century was a time when a great deal of attention was given to methods of teaching—it was the period of Herbart, Froebel, and Pestalozzi—Ruskin seemed to remain indifferent to the interest in the reforms made by his contemporaries in the teaching procedure. The subject matter of education engaged his attention rather than its processes. Nevertheless, one may find here and there in his writings favorable and unfavorable criticisms of contemporary practice that may be grouped under the head of methods.

One of these suggested reforms was a more widespread use of what is termed today visual education. Ruskin appealed for more pictures in the classroom to illustrate historical happenings and for more pictures of great men who might serve as ideals for youth (33:295-99). Moreover, he placed valuable collections of minerals in many schools and colleges, as well as carefully chosen series of pictures (2:387). On one occasion he sent a tree to the Working Men's College to be fixed in a corner of the class room for the study of light and shade. In his own art teaching at the same place he substituted drawing from natural specimens for the drawing from
patterns. Where it was impossible to use specimens from nature, he used casts from real leaves and other natural forms. This idea was an innovation in art teaching of the time and was introduced into the government school of design afterward.

Another phase of method that was stressed very often by Ruskin was accuracy. When referring to accuracy in reading and the use of words, he said, "The entire difference between education and non-education consists in this accuracy" (29:11). He maintained that one may only know one language but if he knows it precisely he is learned in what he has read and may be considered well-educated; whereas an uneducated person may know many languages by memory and yet not know any truly (29:11-12). In the study of literature, Ruskin believed in tracing every strange word through all its forms, Saxon, German, Greek, or Latin, German, and French (29:14-15). He urged "word by word examination of the author which is properly called reading" (29:21). To show what he considered good reading he used the twenty-two opening lines of Milton's "Lycidas" as an illustration, and explained it word by word (29:15-16). Teachers of literature today feel that it is just this scientific study of literature that kills a love of reading. They use extensive rather than intensive reading to foster a love for literature. That the efficiency
of a school of literature depends on the mastery of a few good books and the efficiency of a school of art depends on the understanding of a few good models would be questioned by most present day educators. But while Ruskin's idea here may be considered a little far-fetched, one can not help noting its similarity to Morrison's idea of mastery and thoroughness as opposed to our alleged modern superficiality.

The use of rivalry as an incentive to work was severely condemned by Ruskin. He stated time and again that the awarding of prizes and emulation in any form were false motives and should not be used in the schoolroom. He considered that the aim of teaching was to show to the pupil what his own endowments were, and to develop these endowments, not to set the pupil up as a rival to those who were more gifted (24:99). Examinations should be considered by the pupil as a means of ascertaining his own position and powers, not as a means of carrying off laurels (24:100). In "Remarks Addressed to the Mansfield Art Night School Class" Ruskin asserted that prizes are justified only if they are given

for superior diligence or obedient attention to the teacher's
directions, but not as an indication of superior genius
(16:Vol.2; 127). Ruskin's aversion to the use of rivalry in
education may have some personal feeling back of it. While
he was a student at Oxford he was twice unsuccessful in com­
peting for the Newdigate prize awarded every year for the
best piece of poetry produced by the students. He was very
anxious to win the prize for his parents' sake; he knew that
they had set their hearts on his carrying off laurels. His
health at this time not being any too good, he probably
strained his energies to the breaking point to please his
parents, only to be disappointed twice. Finally, on trying
for the prize the third time he won it, but one feels that his
bitterness in speaking of rivalry may perhaps be traced to
this personal experience.

When he was making suggestions for a public system of
education, Ruskin said, "Every child should be measured by
its own standard, trained to its own duty, and rewarded by
its own just praise" (23:Vol.4; 379). No student was to con­
sider whether he was smarter or duller than others, but
whether he had used his own gifts to the best advantage
(23:Vol.4; 380). Ruskin believed that every child is born
with a defined and limited capacity--that he can do certain
things and is unable to do certain other things, and no amount
of effort or teaching can add to his given allotment of brains; and by competition he may pervert or paralyze his faculties, but cannot stretch them (23:Vol.4; 380). "Education, in its deepest sense, is not the equalizer, but the dis­
ercer of men" (26:6).

Thus, it is evident, that determinism in education was one of Ruskin's creeds. He acknowledged that environment may influence an individual to a very limited extent, but he believed that heredity had a much greater influence on an in­
dividual than any other factor that might enter into his de­
velopment. This belief is shown very clearly by the follow­
ing quotation:

"The greatness or smallness of a man is . . .
determined for him at his birth . . . Education, favorable circumstances, resolution, and indus­
try can do much . . . But apricot out of cur­
rant, great man out of small,--did never yet art or effort make, and in a general way, men have their excellence nearly fixed for them when they are born" (33:225).

The recognition of individual differences is a necessary corollary of determinism in education, and so one finds Rus­
kin always advocating the abolition of the lockstep of regi­
mentation. Yet he gave no suggestions as to how to adapt a general education to individual differences other than in the selection of a suitable kind of life work.

"God has made every man fit for his work; He
has given to the man whom He means for a student the reflective, logical, sequential faculties; and to the man whom He means for an artist the perceptive, sensitive, retentive faculties. And neither of these men, so far from being able to do the other's work, can ever comprehend the way in which it is done" (31:Vol.3; 41).

It was his belief that a public system of education should consider it a duty to find out for what services pupils are qualified, and after training them in a particular kind of work, to make an effort to obtain suitable places for them (32:66). However he did say that all pupils can not be expected to respond to the same treatment: "One man is made of agate, another of oak; one of slate, another of clay. The education of the first is polishing; of the second, seasoning; of the third, rending, of the fourth, moulding. It is of no use to season the agate; it is vain to try to polish the slate" (31:220-21). Like many other critics, Ruskin recognized a situation but gave no specific ways and means of improving that situation. His criticisms were valuable inasmuch as they set people to thinking about contemporary practice in educational matters.

Ruskin would eliminate all competitive examinations, the most widely used form of emulation. He asserted that the sum of all education was to enable one to be glad and that contemporary education was opposed to this end on account of the
severe and frequent examinations which made men hate the habit of learning; that men looked forward to Oxford as an agony from which they were glad to escape into any frivolity; that many deaths were caused by the anxiety and strain attendant on competitive examinations (32:108). According to Ruskin, competitive examinations do not show who is best fitted for a particular place or who is equipped with the most knowledge, but they do show who is best able to stand the physical strain on a given day (23:Vol.1; 117).

Ruskin attempted to put his theories concerning the abolishment of competitive examinations into practice, for when he was planning the education to be given in the St. George's Guild schools, he announced that the first condition of education to be carried on there was that the strength of youths should never be strained—that "their best powers shall be developed in each, without competition, though they shall have to pass crucial, but not severe examinations to show they can do something well (23:Vol.1; 117). Ruskin did not object to examinations for the purpose of finding out whether a pupil had mastered a particular subject or phase of that subject.

"Learning by doing" was advocated by Ruskin. In the agricultural schools he wished to have an amount of land set aside near the school which the pupils might cultivate and thus combine the practical work with the theoretical. In the
study of nature, pupils were not just to read about flowers and birds in books. They were to be taken into the fields to study them at first hand. Whenever possible, the child was to learn to do things rather than to learn about things.

In the matter of character training Ruskin emphasized the importance of a good example set by the teacher and by the parents. He brought out the need of employing teachers of good moral caliber in addition to proper equipment in other respects. We must remember that teaching in the middle 19th century in England was an unskilled occupation. It was the common opinion that any one who could read was able to teach, and personality as a factor of teaching ability was entirely overlooked. Macaulay, in a speech in the House of Commons in 1847, described the schoolmaster of the time as

"the refuse of all other callings, discarded footmen, ruined peddlers, men who cannot work a sum in the rule of three, men who do not know whether the earth is a sphere or a cube. . . . And to such men, men to whom none of us would entrust the key of his cellar, we have entrusted the mind of the rising generation." 1

To be sure, there were many good teacher but Macaulay's indictment was true in general. Some improvement in the teaching ranks had taken place by 1860, when Ruskin began to write

and lecture on educational matters, but not enough to warrant satisfaction with the common type of teacher. For this reason we find Ruskin urging the careful selection of teachers for the sake of the personal influence that a teacher exercises over his pupils.

A few fragmentary comments, then, concerning method in education are all that we find in Ruskin's writings on education. Of the positive comments, that is, those referring to a wider use of visual education, accuracy and thoroughness in learning, the importance of giving good example to the child, and learning by doing, are valuable; but his condemnation of the use of rivalry and competitive examinations as an incentive to good work may be questioned. Of course, like all good things, emulation may be carried so far as to defeat its own purpose. The ideal situation is that advocated by Ruskin, namely, the idea of having the child work to improve upon his own record and of recognizing his past accomplishment as his only rival. Competition occurs in many life situations and school should approximate life situations as far as possible. The writer feels that to use competition in a limited degree is not harmful to the child.
CHAPTER VI

A SURVEY OF ESTIMATES OF RUSKIN'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO
FORMAL AND INFORMAL EDUCATION

On Formal Education

As Ruskin was not an educator in the sense in which we consider a Pestalozzi or a Froebel to be such, estimates of his contributions to education are scarce, and when they do exist, meager in their treatment. None of the articles which we are about to discuss is comprehensive in its scope. Most of them are simply digests of parts of Ruskin's theories gleaned from the reading of a few of his essays. For instance, Jason Almus Russell, in an article entitled "Ruskin the Educator," reviews "Sesame and Lilies and "Time and Tide" and on the basis of this review gives us Ruskin's ideas on education. However, these articles are of some value in that they acquaint the reader with the judgment of various critics of some phases of Ruskin's theories on education.

Russell (35) considers Ruskin to be in advance of his day in his educational views. He bases this judgment on the following facts: that Ruskin recognized a need for accurate, first-hand, vitalized study of the truths of nature and of human life; that the glory of hand labor was a fundamental
principle of his philosophy; and that he stressed the supreme importance of character development by the inculcation of sound principles of moral conduct. The writer of this article credits Ruskin with the fact that these principles are universally approved today and are a part of present-day education.

Charles Franklin Thwing (38) asserts that Ruskin's greatest contribution to education is the emphasis he placed on moral training and character development, and he considers the weakness of his program to be his neglect of the strictly intellectual side of education (38:128-29). He says that Ruskin condemned the scientific type of mind, that he interpreted with his heart as well as with his brain, and that he lacked the power to think, to reason, to weigh evidence, and to judge (38:129). With the exception of this small amount of criticism, this article is a digest of Ruskin's theories on formal education and consists in great part of excerpts from his writings on educational matters.

According to E. A. Knapp (9), Ruskin's position as an educator is subordinate but not insignificant. He considers very praiseworthy Ruskin's efforts to diffuse culture among the people by addressing his writings on art and architecture to the public who were buying pictures and building houses rather than to artists who were painting pictures or design-
ing houses. He places a high estimate upon Ruskin's services in helping the average person to recognize and feel beauty in things. That Ruskin recognized the subconscious influence of early environment by recommending that inferior and mediocre pictures and books be kept from children is noted by the author of this article as a contribution to education, and he considers the provisions that we have in schools today for libraries and reading rooms as part of Ruskin's educational advice put into effect.

In the "Cyclopedia of Education" Ruskin is characterized as a teacher and a prophet. His entire work is considered educational, his writings on aspects of educational theory and practice are judged to be full of productive ideas. The points believed to be worthy of special mention are Ruskin's refutation of the idea prevalent in his time that the state was called upon to give instruction only in the three R's; his propaganda for attractive school rooms and grounds; his attempt to set noble ideas before mankind; and the aim of his educational policy, namely, the development of souls of good quality.

"The Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Education" considers Ruskin a pioneer in educational reform. In support of this statement it sets forth the following improvements that he advocated: the introduction of art and nature study into the
curriculum; better methods of teaching history and literature; medical and physical care of the child; the playground movement; the teaching of handicrafts in the schools; and free, universal, and compulsory education within limits.

In an address given before the Ashburton Club, London, on the occasion of the Ruskin centenary, J. Howard Whitehouse, speaking on "Ruskin as a Pioneer Force in Modern Life," places Ruskin as a pioneer in educational reform."

"Today official recognition is given to the principles Ruskin expounded. Codes have been widened, and although much progress has yet to be made in connexion with our whole system of national education, that which has taken place is precisely on the lines which Ruskin laid down. He urged, for instance, so far back as 1857 that drawing should be taught as an integral branch of education. He pleaded for the inclusion of music and noble literature as essential things in education. He desired that all schools in themselves should be beautiful. He desired to form standards of tastes and judgment by surrounding children with beautiful things. He fought against the idea that education was something to be confined to class-rooms or in buildings, and he made a noble plea for the value of outdoor life and scenes of natural beauty in all schemes of education. All these expressions of educational principles have been in part at least realized. The bare and ugly school-rooms of the past are replaced by buildings furnished in many cases on the lines indicated by Ruskin. Pictures, sculpture, color, architecture are realized to be great instruments of education" (42:50).

Farther on in this same address Whitehouse says: "One of the greatest services Ruskin rendered to the cause of education
was his insistence on the need for handicrafts to be regarded as an essential factor in all forms of education" (42:54).

In an address on "Ruskin as a Political Economist" (41) J. B. Hobson diverts a little from his subject to state that

"long before scientific pedagogy had worked out the psychology of the relation between the brain and hand work, Ruskin had recognized their fundamental importance and had demanded the union of the workshop and the schoolroom. When nature and art, in any real sense, were taboo in our schools, he exposed their vital value, not merely or mainly as subjects in a curriculum, but as pervasive and suggestive influence in the atmosphere of education" (41:96-97).

The writer believes that these estimates of Ruskin's contributions are apt to give the reader an exaggerated impression of his services to the cause of formal education. One is led to believe that Ruskin initiated these movements (the advocating of decorative school buildings and grounds, and the broadening of the course of study to include subjects other than reading, writing, and arithmetic), as no mention is made of other educators who set forth these same ideas before and during Ruskin's time. Ruskin assuredly helped to popularize these ideas and helped to work up a favorable spirit among leaders for the adoption of these educational reforms, and while in advocating them he was in advance of the average person of his time, yet it cannot be said that he was in advance of the men whose names we associate with
education in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, namely, Rousseau (1712-1788), Herbart (1776-1841), Pestalozzi (1746-1826), and Spencer (1820-1903)—men who advocated precisely the same educational reforms that Ruskin did. So, while due credit must be given to Ruskin for giving these ideas a popular appeal by clothing them in the beautiful language that gained a ready audience, we must not overestimate his contributions to formal education by giving them a semblance of originality.

On Informal Education

Estimates of Ruskin's contributions to informal education are more numerous and comprehensive than those pertaining to formal education. This is to be expected, as practically all of Ruskin's writings and lectures were devoted to some way of improving the minds and lives of his audience—an audience that covered a wide range, from the workingman who read his messages on labor problems to the socially elite who listened to his lectures on art. The writer has chosen to present representative estimates rather than every one available, as so many of them duplicate one another. The reader will find that Ruskin's influence on artistic taste in England is recognized unanimously by all critics, while al-
most every one mentions his teaching of appreciation of nature as a distinct contribution to society. And every one agrees that the teaching of right conduct is with Ruskin the underlying reason for his teaching in any field, whether it be that of art, nature, political economy, or education.

Benson, in "Ruskin--A Study in Personality," acknowledges Ruskin to be a few steps in advance of his time in education, as in many other things, but he considers one of his greatest influences to be in the realm of art--the results in this field were more evident than in any other. To Ruskin Benson attributes the dissemination of the idea throughout England, at least, that the architecture of a building should harmonize with the purpose for which the building is erected (1:47). It is Ruskin's influence that is mainly responsible for bringing photographs and reproductions of art treasures before the public (1:39). He set the public thinking about art and made it serious and respected. He took appreciation of art out of the hands of a select few and gave it to the many because it was a medium for raising men from pure commercialism to the higher qualities of life and spirit (1:91). But Ruskin's real concern was the philosophy of art or the ethics of art, and part of his influence is due to the fact that he based all art on morality. People are more interested in morality than in art. If he preached art for its own
sake he would have had few followers, according to Benson (1:273). Ruskin, like three others of the greatest figures of the nineteenth century, Tennyson, Browning, and Carlyle, was a moralist before anything else (1:272). However, Ruskin's effect on the world was one of personality, not one of a reasoned philosophy (1:165) for he arrived at his conclusions by instinct and believed he had attained them by reason (1:106). "The force of Ruskin's work lies not in the argument, which is inconclusive enough, but in the shower of stimulating and enlightening things he lets fall by the way" (1:36), and, "though one may not be wholly convinced by Ruskin's reasoning, it is good to send one's mind to school with him" (1:35). Ruskin is regarded by the author as a personality and moralist; as a man of clear vision and relentless idealism.

In his introduction to "The Work of John Ruskin, Its Influence upon Modern Thought and Life" Charles Walstein states that it is difficult to estimate the value of the work of Ruskin because of its complex nature and its variety of subjects ranging over most of the important spheres that actuate human life. But nevertheless he mentions a few specific changes in English life which may be attributed, not to Ruskin exclusively, but to others in collaboration with him. First, he was in part responsible for a change in
civilization in England during the past generation due to the diffusion of culture among the middle and lower classes. Matthew Arnold and John Ruskin are considered by the author to be responsible for this change more than any other individuals. Secondly, he contributed to the growth of a feeling of economic responsibility and an extension of moral laws to the economic world. The writings of Kingsley, Maurice, George Eliot, and the preaching of John Ruskin are judged to be instrumental in bringing this change about, according to Waldstein.

Ruskin was a contributor to the advance in the intellectual and social life of England in general, and in a greater degree he diffused a taste for art, but Waldstein considers that Ruskin's greatest contribution to English life lies in the fact that he taught people to observe nature (39:1-25).

It is in the field of art that M. H. Spielman claims the greatest influence for Ruskin.

"He is the man who has admittedly moulded the taste of the public to a preponderating extent in matters aesthetic, and apart from his labors outside the pale of art, has exerted an influence so powerful that he has given a direction to the practice of painting and architecture that may still be traced in some of the happiest productions of the day" (36:16).

In the opinion of Leslie Stephens (37), John Ruskin did more than any of his contemporaries to rouse the sluggish
British mind from its habitual slumber. His writings set people to thinking and brought them out of their indifference to artistic matters. However, Stephens believes that Ruskin's want of intellectual balance did much to nullify and waste his unusual abilities, and that his incapacity for consecutive writing, co-ordination of ideas, and consistency was an impediment to his accomplishments. The author also states that Ruskin's theories were arrived at by intuition rather than by reasoning and that his theory of the beautiful was simply the expression of his own instincts.

Julia Wedgewood, in an article in "The Living Age (40)," says that Ruskin did for every reader what glasses do for a short-sighted person; that is, he taught his readers to see the hidden beauties of nature and of life. Although the author of this critique regards Ruskin as inspired when he is speaking of nature and of art, she asserts that he showed no sober judgment nor conviction in matters of politics, finance, or social arrangements. But his disinterested devotion to his fellowmen, his untiring industry for their improvement, and the presentation for their consideration of his lofty ideals are esteemed highly by the author as a distinct contribution to society.

John William Mackail claims first place for Ruskin, not as an interpreter of art, but of life. He states that his
influence was and is now immense, and is perhaps greater, for England at least, than that of any other single teacher or thinker (42:11).

In paying tribute to Ruskin on the one-hundredth anniversary of his birth, Viscount Bryce stresses his artistic contribution to English taste. He says that Ruskin was the first person to awaken his own generation to a realization that there was something else in art other than the old-fashioned conventions and formulas. "Those of you who do not remember the pre-Ruskinian days can hardly understand with what different eyes people have ever since looked upon pictures and thoughts of the scenes or figures that pictures represent" (42:3). Viscount Bryce also makes note of Ruskin's contribution to society through the fostering of a love of nature. He looks upon Ruskin as the best successor of Wordsworth inasmuch as he developed the fundamental ideas that Wordsworth set forth. "Ruskin taught us not only the appreciation of natural scenery, but how to appreciate the artistic treatment of scenery in landscape painting" (42:3).

William Knight, an English artist who lectured on Ruskin at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1909, maintains that Ruskin's influence is greater today than it was during his lifetime. Naturally, he considers Ruskin's great contribution to society to be the instilling of a love of beauty.
"No one has done so much as he did by his writings to raise the tone of feeling and judgment as to the Beautiful within the Anglo-Saxon race. No one has done so much to show what it is and where it is to be found; what fosters and what retards it; giving us almost a new reading and commentary on its laws" (10:90).

An interesting and unusual commentary is given by Amabel Williams-Ellis in her preface to "The Tragedy of John Ruskin" when she says:

"Nor is his influence merely a petrified and inanimate one. Ruskin lives on obscurely in the memory of the people. Visit an English manufacturing town, and you may quite likely find that the Labour Club is called Ruskin Hall. Here not only are meetings held, but billiards are played and beer is drunk in his name, much as the stalls and side-shows of an old English fair were set up in the name of the Virgin or saint" (43:10).

And so the estimates range from those who attribute much influence to Ruskin, like Whitehouse, to those who attribute little influence to him, like Dean Inge, who says, in his lecture on "Ruskin and Plato": "Like all other prophetic messages, Ruskin's teaching is as leaven hid in three measures of meal. There is no likelihood of its having any visible or palpable effect upon society at large" (41:43). The majority, however, agree that he awoke the people of his day to a love for natural beauty, that he widened the circle of those interested in art, and that in general he raised the cultural level of English society.
CONCLUSION

1. John Ruskin (1819-1900) was born in London of wealthy middle-class parents. Up to the year 1850, his primary interest was in the field of art and art criticism, but after that date he devoted himself to the study of the economic situation in England with a view to improving the conditions of the working classes and to obliterating pauperism. This sympathetic interest in the welfare of laboring people led to a study of social problems, including that of education.

It is quite probable that Ruskin's philosophy of education sprang from his own temperament and talents. It is reasonable to suppose that his extremely religious nature impelled him to stress the moral and religious side of education; that his genuine concern for economic maladjustments caused his insistence on the need for training for a definite occupation in life; and that his work as an artist and an art critic led him to advocate the development of the aesthetic qualities in human nature.

2. Ruskin objected to the undue amount of time devoted to the classics and higher mathematics in the schools of his day, and questioned their use for "disciplining" the mind to a greater degree than other studies would. He advocated the
inclusion in the curriculum of subjects with a practical value, such as natural history, religion, political science, and arts and crafts. He denounced the education of the day as being superficial and mistaking erudition for education. A uniform course of study which made no provision for individual differences in aptitudes or abilities, he likewise criticized unfavorably.

3. The development of character was the principal aim of education, according to Ruskin. Of the qualities that go into the making of character Ruskin continually stressed truthfulness, humility, right conduct, spiritual development, love of God, sympathy, charity, contentment, cheerfulness and obedience to lawfully constituted authority. Other objectives in Ruskin's educational program were: vocation, physical strength, good citizenship, the proper use of leisure time, and the development of good taste.

4. The curriculum in Ruskin's scheme of education was to be determined by local conditions and by the future occupations of the pupils being taught. However, there were certain standard subjects which everyone was to learn. They were: the virtues listed in the preceding paragraph as a means of developing good character; history, with the emphasis on the
modern aspects of it; geography, from a strictly scientific viewpoint; religion, from a study of the Bible and of nature; nature study, from field trips, if possible; music; drawing; hygiene and physical exercise; and vocational work which meant the trades for boys and home-making for girls. Ruskin wished the schools to pay less attention to the "tool" subjects, which made up practically the entire curriculum, and to give greater attention to the cultural and vocational studies.

5. Of Ruskin's suggestions for improving the processes of education, the following have the greatest significance:

a. A wider use of visual material, such as suitable pictures in the classroom and the use of natural specimens in art and nature study.

b. Accuracy and thoroughness in learning.

c. The importance of good example set by parents and teachers.

d. Use of the psychological principle that there is no impression without expression, or learning by doing.

e. Exclusion of rivalry as an incentive to school work.

f. Recognition of individual differences both in quality of work and in type of work.
6. Ruskin is considered a pioneer in educational reform by those of his critics who attempt to estimate his contributions to formal education. At a time when the majority of people in England believed that a knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic constituted an education for the masses, Ruskin preached the necessity and value of an enriched curriculum, character education, and training for occupation. One author places him as one of the three men who by their writings have contributed to an advance in educational matters between the last half of the nineteenth century and the present, the other two being Herbert Spencer and John Dewey. 1

It is generally agreed upon by those who estimate Ruskin's contributions to society in general that Ruskin influenced favorably and to a great extent the tastes of the people in matters of art. He fostered a love and appreciation of nature. By calling attention to the finer things of life he gave a new set of values to society. In general, Ruskin was instrumental, to a large degree, in raising the cultural level of English society in the nineteenth century.

"The greatest tribute to Ruskin is not to be found in any record of legislation or material changes. It is to be found in the inspiration he brought into the lives of men in the new vision given to the world" (41:12).
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