

The abstract method which Fichte followed was adopted, though probably without any distinct and conscious connection, by a more practical thinker who has made a lasting impression upon one distinct side of political economy. This was J. H. von Thünen,¹

though unjustly—been accused of realistic epicureanism and egoistic exclusiveness. Both so different are yet at one in their comprehensive view of modern life: unclear in single things, full of error and ignorance in detail, their intuitive genius impels them to anticipate the great contrasts of our society, to enter a protest against narrow egoism, and to claim a moral foundation and renovation also of the economic structure. If the poet in his telling description in his 'Wanderjahre,' introduces the chase, fishery and agriculture, commerce and industry, art and science as a great organism; if he preaches the sanctity of landed property and of the family, a moral education, a fixed professional activity and free association, self-restraint and moral subordination, but as the crown of all, a free union for all interests of humanity—if he holds up this picture as an ethical mirror to his age, he is as wrong in single details as he is right in his fundamental conception, just like Fichte. We may say of both what Rosenkranz says of Goethe: the detail may be criticised without destroying its value; it is petty to stickle at the single oddities and contradictions and to overlook the general truth. Both stand in grand prophetic conception above the limited micrology of the professional science of their age. They rise beyond the dim oil lamps of common life like shining rockets, marking the future course in large

strokes though the detail remains unclear; and this is the vocation of the genius who, with intuitive glance, understands his age and strides in front of it."

¹ Died 1850. Von Thünen was one of the first agriculturists in Germany, schooled first in the crude traditional, then in the rational methods of Thaer, and latterly scientifically at the University of Göttingen. A native of Oldenburg, he married a Mecklenburg lady, became tenant-farmer in 1806, and purchased in 1810 the estate of Tellow which, through his writings, has become famous. His biography has been written by Schuhmacher (1868). The historian of German economic science, Wilhelm Roscher (1817-1894), has devoted an interesting chapter to von Thünen, who, like Liebig from a different point of view, may be considered a pioneer in modern German agriculture. Scientific economists have been proud to call themselves pupils of von Thünen, among them no one more so than the eminent professor of Economics, Heinrich von Helderich (died 1892: Göttingen and Munich). In this country Ingram has drawn attention to von Thünen's unique position: von Thünen was strongly impressed with "the danger of a violent conflict between the middle class and the proletariat, and studied earnestly the question of wages, which he was one of the first to regard habitually, not merely as the price of the commodity labour, but as the means