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Cambridge University Press

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John Ruskin

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# The Works of John Ruskin

VOLUME 4: MODERN PAINTERS II

JOHN RUSKIN  
EDITED BY EDWARD TYAS COOK  
AND ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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WORKS OF  
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EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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VOLUME IV

MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME II



J Ruskin

Allen & Co. Sc

Mont Blanc with the Aiguilles, from above Les Tines,  
(1842)

From the Collection of Sir J. Simon, K.C.B.

# MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME II

CONTAINING

PART III

SECTIONS I & II

OF THE IMAGINATIVE AND  
THEORETIC FACULTIES

BY

JOHN RUSKIN

*“Accuse me not  
Of arrogance, . . . . .  
If, having walked with Nature,  
And offered, far as frailty would allow,  
My heart a daily sacrifice to Truth,  
I now affirm of Nature and of Truth,  
Whom I have served, that their Divinity  
Revolts, offended at the ways of men,  
Philosophers, who, though the human soul  
Be of a thousand faculties composed,  
And twice ten thousand interests, do yet prize  
This soul, and the transcendent universe,  
No more than as a mirror that reflects  
To proud Self-love her own intelligence.”*

WORDSWORTH

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TO THE  
LANDSCAPE ARTISTS OF ENGLAND  
THIS WORK  
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY  
THEIR SINCERE ADMIRER,  
THE AUTHOR

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## ORIGINAL ADVERTISEMENT TO VOL. II<sup>1</sup>

THE following chapters will be found to confirm and elucidate the positions left doubtful in the preceding volume. They ought not to have appeared in a detached form, but the writer could not expect his argument to be either remembered with accuracy, or reviewed with patience, if he allowed years<sup>2</sup> to elapse between its sections.

<sup>1</sup> [So in the third and later editions. In eds. 1 and 2 the Advertisement reads:—

“The illustrations in preparation for the third volume of this work having rendered a large page necessary, the present volume and the new edition of the first volume are arranged in a corresponding form.

“The following chapters,” etc.]

<sup>2</sup> [Ed. 1 reads “Olympiads” for “years.”]

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*Note.*—Of these drawings, Nos. 1, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 and the *frontispiece* have not before been published. No. 2 was published, on a smaller scale and by half-tone process, in the *Magazine of Art*, April 1900. No. 5 (half-tone process from the drawing) was published in the *Artist* for July 1897, and the *Magazine of Art* for April 1900. No. 6 was published by half-tone process in the *Magazine of Art* for April 1900. No. 12 was published by half-tone process in the *Artist* for July 1897, and the *Magazine of Art* for April 1900.

Of the drawings, some were exhibited at the Ruskin Exhibition in the rooms of the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour, 1901. No. 187 in the Catalogue of that Exhibition is No. 4 here; No. 293 is No. 7; No. 296 is No. 6; and No. 300 No. 11.

<sup>1</sup> Except No. 6.

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## INTRODUCTION TO VOL. IV

THE second volume of *Modern Painters*, published in 1846, which is printed in the following pages, was “not meant,” says Ruskin, “to be the least like what it is.”<sup>1</sup> It is also in many ways unlike the first volume, published three years earlier. Instead of a defence of the moderns, we hear now the praise of the ancients. Whereas the closing paragraphs of the first volume are an exhortation to truth in landscape, those of the second are a hymn of praise to “the angel-choir of Angelico, with the flames on their white foreheads waving brighter as they move.” There is in both volumes a note of enthusiasm, but it is directed in the second to a different subject, and this difference cannot wholly be accounted for by the development of the author’s scheme. The diversion from “ideas of truth” to “ideas of beauty,” would not alone, or necessarily, have led us from Turner’s later pictures to “an outcry of enthusiastic praise of religious painting.”<sup>2</sup> Again in style, both volumes are marked by eloquence, but the eloquence of the second is in a different key. The object of this introduction is to trace, as far as possible in Ruskin’s own words, the course of his history and the development of his interests between the first volume of *Modern Painters* and the second.

The first volume was off his hands at the beginning of May 1843, and he at once set to work upon the second.<sup>3</sup> His work was both learning and writing. The days which he marked as bad in his diary were those on which he had learnt nothing.<sup>4</sup> In 1843 he did not go abroad; he kept terms at Oxford, making an occasional excursion to study the pictures at Blenheim; and the family migration from Herne Hill to the larger house, with considerable grounds, at Denmark Hill, was in itself a further change. We have had an account already, in a *Letter to a College Friend*, of his pursuits at this time—his continuing study of Turner’s pictures and drawings, his own studies in the drawing of plants and leaves, his botany

<sup>1</sup> *Præterita*, ii. ch. iv. § 82.

<sup>2</sup> *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 76.

<sup>3</sup> See passage from his diary quoted in Vol. III. p. xxxi.

<sup>4</sup> “Rather pleasant evening,” he notes in his diary for Dec. 9, 1843, “but nothing learned.”

and chemistry and mineralogy, his Greek, and Italian, and French.<sup>1</sup> The diary shows that Plato, Pliny, and Sismondi were among the authors he was reading at this time. He was often, too, at the British Museum, sometimes in the company of his Christ Church friends, Liddell and Newton, studying the marbles, the drawings, the missals. He was learning more than he was writing, and the second volume made small way. "Nothing occurring this year," he says in his diary on Oct. 6, 1843, "—hard work at art: much discouraged." There was also work to be done, as we have already seen,<sup>2</sup> in replying to criticisms of the first volume, and in preparing the second edition of it. The winter (1843–1844) passed without seeing the second volume far advanced. His activities, interests and moods, during the first period of work for it, are shown in the following notes from his diary, supplementary to those given in the last volume:<sup>3</sup>—

*Nov. 20, 1843.*—Have done Plato—some Pliny—written a good bit . . . and a little bit of Rio<sup>4</sup>—tolerable day's work—some Italian besides—a walk—and investigation of foliage of Scotch fir.

*Nov. 21.*— . . . Read a little Plato—wrote a bit—and composed a good study for a vignette.

*Nov. 22.*—Didn't like the study this morning, and didn't mend it—must make another. Read a little Plato—wrote a long letter to Brown<sup>5</sup>—wrote a chapter of book. . . .

*Nov. 23.*—An unprofitable day. I fear I have spoiled my etching plate and didn't write much; pleasant saunter in Dulwich Gallery—read a little Italian—finished first vol. Waagen. Made another study for my vignette; didn't like it; general discouragement, except in seeing of what shabby stuff critics are made. Impressed with the rapidity of an artist's hand in making a sketch from Rubens to-day.

*Nov. 25.*—A capital day; wrote a first-rate chapter, getting me out of many difficulties; succeeded with my vignette and got an encouraging letter from Armytage,<sup>6</sup>—besides some Italian, Greek, and a little chemistry, and a game of chess.<sup>7</sup> . . .

*Dec. 28, 1843.*— . . . Drew a little, but unsatisfactory; wrote notes—and idled. One thing only I have learned, that the common fungus which grows on wet wood is most beautiful and delicate in its sponge-like structure of interior. I must microscope it to-morrow.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. I. pp. 493–494.

<sup>2</sup> Vol. III. pp. xlv., 641–661.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. III. pp. xxix.–xxxi., xlv. *n*.

<sup>4</sup> See below, p. xxiii.

<sup>5</sup> (*Cf.* the letter in Appendix III., below, p. 390.)

<sup>6</sup> The engraver of many plates in *Modern Painters*.

<sup>7</sup> Always a favourite game with Ruskin.

<sup>8</sup> But see note on p. 158, below.

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## INTRODUCTION

xxi

*Jan. 3, 1844.*— . . . Thought a little over the book, but wrote nothing. I get less and less productive, I think, every day.

*Jan. 4.*—A bad day. Went over to Cousen; <sup>1</sup> found him infernally dear; put me out. Came back; my father says I must keep to same size as the other volume—flooer No. 2. My mother asked me if I were not getting diffuse—flooer No. 3. . . . All confusion about my book. I am in one of those blue fits in which one would be glad to throw up everything one possesses to get peace and live quietly in Chamouni. . . .

*Jan. 6.*— . . . Everybody seems to think my book should be in one volume. Plagues me.

*Jan. 10.*— . . . Harrison at dinner; young Smith in the evening.<sup>2</sup> Settled not to bring out the work in numbers,<sup>3</sup> and so shall take my leisure. . . .

*Jan. 14.*—Yesterday a very valuable day; good hard work over painted glass in British Museum. Delicious hour in Turner's gallery. . . .

*Jan. 24.*— . . . Went to British Museum. Felt the Phigaleian Frieze for the first time, and understood the difference between it and the Lycians,<sup>4</sup> so that I count myself as having made a great step to-day. Chess in the evening.

*Feb. 25.*—Sunday—a good day because wet. I wish Sunday were always wet, otherwise I lose the day. Read some of Spenser in the morning and learned it; then some of Hooker; did a good deal of divinity. . . .

*Feb. 26.*— . . . At Ward's, the glass painter's, with Oldfield: my head is quite full of broken bits of colour—madonnas—and crucifixions mixed up with oolitic fossils and shadowy images of the Lorenzo in different lights brooding over all.<sup>5</sup>

*March 30.*—My second edition is out to-night, and I have nothing but my new volume to attend to.

It will be seen that the plans for the second volume were at present undecided. He had intended, it seems, to bring out the continuation of his essay in parts, instead of volumes. He was also busily engaged in preparing illustrations and having them engraved. Ultimately the illustrations were deferred till the third volume, but in anticipation of it the size of the page of the second volume was enlarged.<sup>6</sup> Probably the

<sup>1</sup> The engraver of some of the plates in the last three volumes of *Modern Painters*.

<sup>2</sup> For Harrison, see Vol. I. p. xlvi. ; Vol. II. p. xxviii. ; Vol. III. p. lii. "Young Smith," the late George Murray Smith, was at this time entering upon control of the firm of Smith, Elder & Co.

<sup>3</sup> A manner of publication which Ruskin often adopted in later life.

<sup>4</sup> "The Lycians," the marbles from Xanthus. See E. T. Cook's *Handbook to the Greek and Roman Antiquities in the British Museum*, chs. vii., xiii.

<sup>5</sup> For a reference to Michael Angelo's "Tomb of Lorenzo," see below, p. 232.

<sup>6</sup> See "Advertisement," p. xi., and Bibliographical Note, p. liii.

contents of the volume were at this time being planned on very different lines from those afterwards adopted. It was intended to continue the essay on the lines of landscape study. At what time he began the first draft which is still preserved, and of which account is given below (pp. 361–381), it is impossible to say. The dividing line is, as we shall see, the tour of 1845, and probably the first draft was written before that time. For it includes no references to the painters whose work so greatly impressed him in that year. The central idea of the book, however—namely its theory of beauty in relation to the theoretic faculty—was with him from the first.<sup>1</sup> On November 30, 1843, he says in his diary: “In the *Artist and Amateur* I see a series of essays on beauty commenced which seem as if they would anticipate me altogether.” The second essay sufficed, however, to dispel this fear. “Find Rippingille all wrong,” he writes on December 30, “in his essay on beauty: shall have the field open.”

The foreign tour of 1844, however, diverted Ruskin’s interests away from that field. The success of the first volume of *Modern Painters* was not a decisive point in his career. We have already heard him refer to the continuation of that work as a mere passing of the time, a *parergon* almost.<sup>2</sup> He was still, as his diary shows, giving much of his best effort to drawing in water-colours, and also, in some measure, to painting in oils. It was still an open question what was to be the main work of his life. The tour of 1844 did not finally answer the question. He went to Chamouni, and the Simplon, and for a few days to Zermatt. He was absorbed once more in botany, in geology, in drawing. Extracts from his diary of this tour have already been given;<sup>3</sup> they show him occupied in watching skies, in studying mountain forms, in drawing from leaves and flowers. “The hills are as clear as crystal,” he writes on June 16; “more lovely, I think, every day, and I don’t know how to leave off looking at them.” After leaving Chamouni, he went to the Simplon, there meeting James Forbes,<sup>4</sup> and having his interest in geology yet further excited. The panorama of the Alps as seen from the Bel Alp, which he drew at

<sup>1</sup> The theory of “Typical Beauty” worked out in this volume is foreshadowed in the *Letter to a College Friend* of May 16, 1841: see Vol. I. p. 451.

<sup>2</sup> See letter to Osborne Gordon of March 10, 1844, in Vol. III. p. 665.

<sup>3</sup> See Vol. III. pp. xxv.–xxvii. The itinerary of the tour was as follows: By Paris to Dijon and the Jura; St. Laurent (May 30), Geneva (June 1), St. Martin’s (June 5), Chamouni (June 6–July 3), St. Martin’s (July 4), Geneva (July 7), St. Gingolph (July 8), Sion (July 9), Brieg (July 10), over the Simplon to Baveno (July 12), return over the Simplon (July 15) to Brieg (July 17), Zermatt (July 18), Brieg (July 21). Ruskin’s parents then went to Vevay, while he returned to Chamouni; he rejoined them at Vevay, and they reached Geneva (Aug. 2), Champagnole (Aug. 4); thence to Paris where they stayed some days; returning by Amiens (Aug. 20), Montreuil (Aug. 21), and Calais (Aug. 22) to Dover (Aug. 23).

<sup>4</sup> As described in *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. § 97, and more fully in *Deucalion*, i. ch. x. (“Thirty Years Since.”)

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this time and afterwards slightly coloured, is now in the Sheffield Museum. On the way home he stopped some days in Paris, studying closely the pictures in the Louvre. "I shall try to paint a Madonna some day, I believe," he writes in his diary.<sup>1</sup> During the winter of 1844–1845 (for which there are no diaries) the book seems to have made little progress; he felt, he says, "in a cyclone of new knowledge."<sup>2</sup> His "fit of figure study" had opened his eyes, in some degree, to the merit of fourteenth-century painting, and caused him to abandon "Rubens and Rembrandt for the Venetian School." In the first draft of the second volume there are unfinished chapters in which lines of beauty are illustrated both from mountain forms and from the human figure;<sup>3</sup> he was enlarging the range of his studies in art and nature, and feeling his way to laws common to all manifestations of the beautiful. We see the bent of his thoughts at this time in the letter to Liddell of October 12, 1844. "As soon," he says, "as I began to throw my positions respecting the beautiful into form, I found myself necessarily thrown on the human figure for great part of my illustrations; and at last, after having held off in fear and trembling as long as I could, I saw there was no help for it, and that it must be taken up to purpose. So I am working at home from Fra Angelico, and at the British Museum from the Elgins."<sup>4</sup> He was soon to be driven with yet more compelling force into such studies. But for the present his hardest work was in manual practice.<sup>5</sup> He took up Turner's "Liber Studiorum," practised its methods, "and by the spring-time in 1845 was able to study from nature accurately in full chiaroscuro, with a good frank power over the sepia tinting."<sup>6</sup>

During the same winter (1844–1845) Ruskin read Rio's book on Christian art.<sup>7</sup> His interest in this book, quickened by his studies in the Louvre, determined him to revisit Italy and study the early Christian painters before proceeding any further with his essay. The tour of 1845 was the decisive factor in making the second volume what it is, and was

<sup>1</sup> Cited in *Præterita*, ii. ch. v. § 103.

<sup>2</sup> *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 104.

<sup>3</sup> See below, Appendix i., p. 368.

<sup>4</sup> See Vol. III. p. 669.

<sup>5</sup> A good deal of his time and thought in 1844 was occupied with stained glass, in connection with a window he was designing for Camberwell Parish Church; letters dealing with this matter will be found in a later volume of the edition; see *Præterita*, ii. ch. viii. § 153. Ruskin's remarks on the subject of painted glass (e.g. in *Two Paths*, § 78) were founded on much careful study and some practice.

<sup>6</sup> *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 104.

<sup>7</sup> *De La Poésie Chrétienne dans son principe, dans sa matière et dans ses formes*: Paris, 1836. An English version, with references to the second volume of *Modern Painters*, appeared in 1854 under the title, *The Poetry of Christian Art*. Ruskin says that he also read Lord Lindsay's introduction to his "Christian Art" (*Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. §§ 104, 116, and below, p. 118 n., and Epilogue, § 7, p. 348), but this must be a mistake, as the essay referred to (*Progression by Antagonism*) was not published till 1846, and the book not till 1847.

also the turning point in Ruskin's career. It revealed to him "the art of man in its full majesty for the first time," and in himself "a strange and precious gift," enabling him to recognise it. Henceforth he felt that his life "must no longer be spent only in the study of rocks and clouds." He had heard a fresh call, and he accepted it; he must become an interpreter of the nobleness of human art, as well as of the beauty of nature. As Ruskin has himself explained this crisis in his mental and literary life in detail, both in *Præterita* (ii. chs. vi. and vii.), and in the Epilogue to the present volume (pp. 346–357), there is no occasion further to emphasize it here; but those passages in his works may be illustrated from his letters and diaries of the time.

He set out from England on April 2, 1845, for the first tour that he had ever undertaken without his father and mother.<sup>1</sup> His father was unable to go away, and his mother stayed with her husband. Ruskin had with him as travelling companion the young brother of his mother's maid, John Hobbs, called "George" in the Ruskin household, where both master and son were named John. He remained in Ruskin's service till 1854, and seems to have been a youth of cheerful spirit and humour.<sup>2</sup> But the commander-in-chief of the expedition was the Chamouni guide, Joseph

<sup>1</sup> The following is the itinerary of the tour: Dover (April 2), Calais, Montreuil (April 3), Beauvais (April 4), Paris (April 5, 6), Sens (April 7), Mont Bard (April 8), Dijon (April 9), Champagnole (April 10), Geneva (April 11), Annecy (April 12, 13, 14), Confians (April 15), Grenoble (April 16, 17), Gap (April 18), Digne (April 19, 20), Draguignan (April 21), Nice (April 22), Mentone (April 23), Oneglia (April 24), Savona (April 25), Genoa (April 26, 27, 28), Sestri (April 29–May 1), Spezzia (May 2), Lucca (May 3–11), Pisa (May 12–27), Pistoja (May 28), Florence (May 29–July 6), Pietra Mala (July 7), Bologna (July 8), Parma (July 10–13), Pavia (July 14), Milan (July 15–18), Como (July 19, 20), Vogogna (July 21, 22), Macugnaga (July 23–Aug. 3), Ponte Grande (Aug. 4), Domo d'Ossola (Aug. 5), Formazza (Aug. 6), Airolo (Aug. 7), Faido (Aug. 8–17), Baveno (Aug. 18–31), Como, Bergamo, Desenzano (Sept. 5), Verona (Sept. 6–8), Padua (Sept. 9), Venice (Sept. 10–Oct. 13), Padua (Oct. 14), Vicenza, Verona, Brescia (Oct. 18), Milan (Oct. 20), Domo d'Ossola (Oct. 21), Simplon (Oct. 22), Martigny (Oct. 23), Nyon (Oct. 25), Geneva, Champagnole, Dijon (Oct. 28), Mont Bard, Paris (Oct. 31), Beauvais (Nov. 1, 2), Montreuil (Nov. 3), Dover (Nov. 4).

<sup>2</sup> George's quaint remarks, and Couttet's chaff of him, supply the element of light comedy in Ruskin's letters home. Thus George did not appreciate the heat and compulsorily light diet of Florence. "Oh, sir," he said, writes Ruskin (June 13), "think of them at home walking in the acacia walk and eating as many strawberries as they like, and having all the blinds down in the library, and here are we, without a breath of air, and mustn't eat anything." For I had told him what is very true, that he mustn't touch fruit of any kind now that the hot weather has begun." Among the Alps, George became a mighty walker. But, said Couttet, "afin que George aille bien, il faut lui donner à manger souvent, et beaucoup à la fois" (Aug. 14). George's criticism of the composition of Turner has often been made in more pretentious language. Ruskin had shown him first the actual spot, and then Turner's vision of it. "George didn't recognize it at first," writes Ruskin from Faido (August 17), "and on my showing him how it had been adapted—'Well, he is a cunning old gentleman, to be sure; just like Mrs. Todgers, dodging among the tender pieces with a fork.' Vide *Martin Chuzzlewit*." [Ch. ix. The



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Marie Couttet, who had been with Ruskin in 1844, and in whose prudence, resourcefulness, and integrity his parents had full confidence. It was amply deserved, and Ruskin cherished to the last the warmest affection for his old guide, philosopher, and friend.<sup>1</sup> But all Couttet's care did not allay the anxiety of the fond parents at Denmark Hill, which is indicated clearly enough by passages in the son's letters home. "I am very cautious about ladders," he writes (Florence, June 16); "and always try their steps thoroughly, and hold well with hands." So again: "I will take great care of boats at Baveno, merely using them on calm afternoons for exercise" (Faïdo, Aug. 15); and from Baveno, on his way to Venice (Aug. 23), "You needn't be afraid of railroads; I shan't trouble their dirty ironwork." Turner had foreseen the old people's anxiety and tried to dissuade Ruskin from going: "Why *will* you go to Switzerland—there'll be such a fidge about you, when you're gone."<sup>2</sup> But he had his work to do; nor in the doing of it did he ever lose loving thought of his parents. There is a letter to his mother which illustrates very beautifully the relations between them:—

BAVENO, Sunday, 24th Aug.

MY DEAREST MOTHER,—As I received on the 22nd a letter of my father's dated 13th August, I trust that this will either arrive on or

remark is made of Mrs. Todgers by Bailey, the boot-boy.] George knew how to humour his master. It is a quaint glimpse that we get of the party at Padua, where, when Ruskin was feeling unwell, George was sent out to buy some scrap of a picture to hang in the bedroom; "and he brought me a seven-inch square bit of fifteenth century tempera, a nameless saint with a scarlet cloak and an embossed nimbus, who much comforted me" (*Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 145). For further account of George, see *ibid.* ii. ch. vi. § 108.

<sup>1</sup> For Ruskin's references to Couttet, see below, Epilogue, § 4; *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. ch. xvii. § 30 n.; *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 4, 5, 75; *Proserpina*, ii. ch. iv.; "The Story of Arachne," § 1, in *Verona and its Rivers*, 1894; *Præterita*, vol. ii. *passim*. Ruskin's letters home during this tour show how carefully Couttet guided, guarded, and physicked his charge. Nothing escaped him; he held an umbrella over Ruskin while the latter sketched; he was even at hand to see that Ruskin always took "a squeeze of lemon in his water." The peasant's time must have hung heavily during the long sojourn at Florence, but Couttet "solaced himself by making a careful collection of all the Florentine wild flowers" (*Præterita*, ii. ch. vii. § 130) in order, as we learn from one of the letters home, that Ruskin might compare them with the flowers in Florentine pictures. It must have been with considerable relief that Couttet saw his young employer turn to the mountains. At Macugnaga he was in his element—"cooking the dinner (as Ruskin wrote, July 29), going out to gather strawberries for tea, mulling wine in the evening, and encouraging everybody all day like Mark Tapley." Couttet's saying of his charge—"le pauvre enfant, il ne sait pas vivre"—shows how well he had read one aspect of Ruskin's eager temperament. It may be interesting to state that Couttet received for his services four francs a day clear for himself, Ruskin paying his board and lodging.

<sup>2</sup> *Præterita*, ii. ch. vi. § 106. Ruskin believed "he made up his mind that I was heartless and selfish." It seems possible that Turner's love of mystification may have had something to do with his advice; for he knew that one of Ruskin's motives was to hunt up the artist's sketching-ground. There were, however, disturbances at that time in Switzerland, and a possibility of danger.

before the second of September, in time to assure you of my most affectionate remembrance of you, and my hope that I shall not be away from you on any more birthdays. I am already in a hurry to get home, even from this delicious place, and I only go to Venice because I *must* see the pictures there before I write; or else I should run direct and directly for Denmark Hill, and be with you, instead of this letter. I think there is such a change come over me lately that there will be no more disagreements between us as to where we shall go to or what we shall do, for my childishnesses are—I am (in one respect) sorry to say,—nearly gone, and now, wherever I am—in church, palace, street or garden—there is always much that I can study and enjoy; and although I am just as self-willed as ever, yet my tastes are so much more yours and my father's that nothing can come wrong to me, and if even you were to desire a sojourn at Wiesbaden or Baden-Baden, I believe I should find enough to employ myself withal; and I think in other places you will find me a little more of the cicerone than I used to be, and perhaps something of the guide where I was formerly only an encumbrance.

I am looking forward with infinite delight to the prospect of showing my father all my new loves, making him decipher the sweet writing of Simon Memmi in the Campo Santo, and leading him into the dark corners of the cloisters of St. Mark, where my favourite Fra Angelicos look down from the walls like visions, and into the treasuries of the old sacristies, lighted with the glass that glows “with blood of queens and kings”; and I think I shall have something for *you* too, when I show you the children of Mino da Fiesole—such sweet, living, laughing, holy creatures, that I am afraid you will wish they were yours instead of me. And then I can draw something better than I could, and I draw now less for the picture and more for the interest of the thing; so that when my father wants a sketch of anything, I shall be better able to do it than when I thought merely of a certain kind of picturesqueness, and I think we shall agree something better in our notions of subject too. Indeed I have made myself now a kind of Jack of all trades. I have had a try at Angelico,—the most refined drawing of which the human hand is capable; at Tintoret and Titian, the boldest and most manly. Architecture I can draw very nearly like an architect, and trees a great deal better than most botanists, and mountains rather better than most geologists, and now I am going actually to draw some garden for you, out of Isola Madre, and study some of its bee-haunted aloes to-morrow morning, if it be fine: it is sweet to see the aloe with two or three hives of bees about it, making its yellow blossoms yellower.

And besides all this, I have got more patriotic too, as I told you before, so that if we go to Scotland I shall enjoy that more than I used to do; in short, it does not now much matter where I go, for I shall

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always find something to do and to please me. And so I have only to pray you to take care of your sight, and to make yourself comfortable in the idea of my being soon home again—only four weeks more, you know, after you receive this; and I assure you it will not be longer than I can help; not even Venice will keep me longer than is absolutely necessary; and then I hope I shall write a very nice book, and one that I needn't be ashamed of. I have done some good to art already, and I hope to do a great deal more.

Only I cannot write any more to-day, for I have written a long letter to my father too—about certain new opinions of mine which I was afraid he would misinterpret, and I shall miss the post if I don't take care. I intended to have written this much better than I have, but I have been thinking of all we have to see together and not of my writing, and so, my dearest mother, with every prayer for your long preservation to me,—Believe me ever, your most affectionate son,

JOHN RUSKIN.

*P.S.*—I suppose that Ann will seize upon this letter from the postman, and bring it in proudly, recognizing the badness of the hand. I received a message from her by George the other day, for which I am much obliged; remember me most kindly to her, and to them all.

On this tour of 1845 Ruskin wrote almost daily to his father or mother, or to both. He kept no other diary of travel, though he filled note-books with descriptions of pictures and other works of art. The letters and the note-books are drawn upon both in this introduction, and for purpose of illustrating passages in the text of the volume. It is unnecessary to follow Ruskin in the earlier portion of his tour; the following passage from a letter will serve to show his manner of travel:—

CHAMPAGNOLE, *April 10.*— . . . There was such alacrity on the part of the landlady, and such inquiries after Monsieur and Madame, as made me feel quite at home. They lighted a fire in the sitting-room, which is so clean and in such order it would be a credit to Lucy herself, and a worked foot-mat put below each chair, and its pictures, and sofa, and white marble table, and windows on two sides, make me wish I could carry it away with me. At six o'clock they brought me a couple of trout fried, just out of the river, of the richest flavour, followed by a roasted woodcock on delicate toast, and a small perfectly compounded omelette soufflée. To encourage the house, as well as to make that which was already near perfection absolutely perfect, I looked over the *carte des vins*, and finding half bottles of sillery mousseux at 3 frs., I ordered one, and it turning out very pure and in fine condition, rendered, as I conceived, the whole thing worthy of Horace or Mr.

Rogers. Meanwhile the sun was sinking gradually, and I was warned of something equally perfect in that direction and way by seeing my champagne suddenly become *rose*. And a beautiful sunset it was: glowing over the pine woods, and far up into the sky, long after the sun went down. And as I came back to my soufflé and sillery, I felt sad at thinking how few were capable of having such enjoyment, and very doubtful whether it were at all proper in me to have it all to myself.

In the earlier letters there is something about hotel and posting charges, but Ruskin has characteristically to admit later on that his accounts would not come right.<sup>1</sup>

It was at Lucca that his artistic and intellectual pilgrimage really began. His first impressions were almost overwhelming:—

“What in the wide world I am to do (he writes, May 4) in-or out of this blessed Italy I cannot tell. I have discovered enough in an hour’s ramble after mass to keep me at work for a twelvemonth. Such a church! So old, 680 probably, Lombard, all glorious dark arches and columns, covered with holy frescoes and gemmed gold pictures on blue grounds. I don’t know when I shall get away, and all the church fronts charged with heavenly sculpture, and inlaid with whole histories in marble.”

It was here, then, that the glory of the inlaid architecture of Italy, the beauty of Italian sacred painting, and the ideal of Christian sculpture were revealed to him. The following letter shows how his days were spent in that tutress city:<sup>2</sup>—

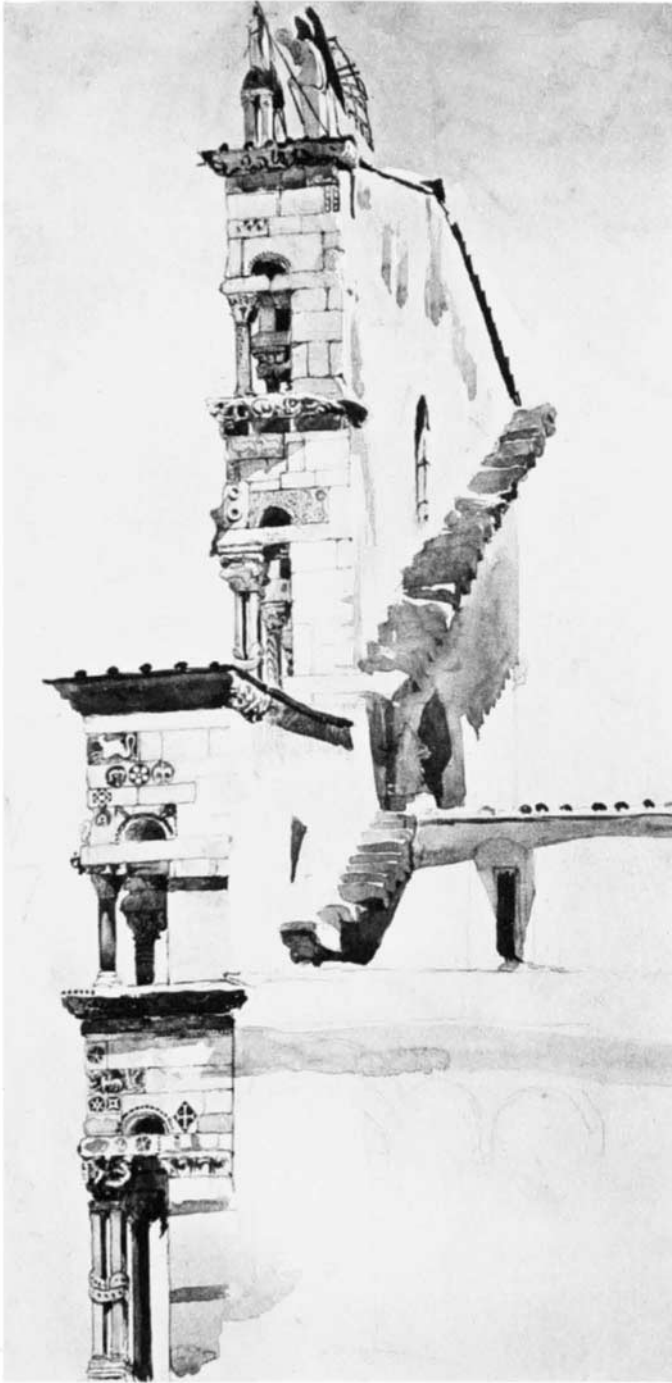
LUCCA, *Tuesday evening* [May 6].

MY DEAREST FATHER,—Though it is getting late and I have a great deal to write before going to bed, I must give you an account of the way I spend my day here. In the first place, I find it is of no use getting up much before 6, for I only tire myself before the day

<sup>1</sup> “In one way,” he writes (Nyon, Oct. 25), “I have let my money go in a very careless way. I began most economically and arithmetically, and went on to Nice counting sous, but at Nice I found myself short by six five-franc pieces, and after puzzling over the matter for two hours I had to give it up, which disgusted me with my accounts, and when I got into pauls and batz (? bajocci) and all sorts of rubbishy incalculables, I gave it up in despair, and threw it all into Couttet’s hands.”

<sup>2</sup> It may be interesting to state, as an indication of hotel charges in those days, that at Lucca (where Ruskin had two large rooms, besides accommodation for George and Couttet), he paid for “every conceivable luxury and convenience,” 17½ francs per day (including board for the whole party). At Pisa, where he was yet more spacioously lodged, he paid 17 francs, but he dined out. At Florence, where he had lodgings, he managed for 8 francs a day, “but I am very expensive,” he adds, “in sight-seeing.” At Airolo, the three fared sumptuously for 7 francs.

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San Michele, Lucca.  
(1845)

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is over. So at 6 precisely I am up, and my breakfast—in the shape of coffee, eggs, and a volume of Sismondi—is on the table by 7 to the minute.

By 8 I am ready to go out with a chapter of history read. I go to the old Lombard church of which I told you, for the people hardly frequent this (owing to its age and gloom, I suppose), and therefore I can draw there without disturbing any one even during the mass hours. There I draw among the frescoes and mosaics (and with a noble picture of Francia over one altar) until 12 o'clock. Precisely at 12 I am ready to begin my perambulation (with the strong light for the pictures) among the other churches, for the masses are then over, and I can get at everything. I usually go first to San Romano, the church of the Dominican monks, where are the two great Fra Bartolommeos. The monks are most kind in every way, and pleased at my giving so much time to study their pictures. They take all their candlesticks off their altar and bring me steps to get close to the picture with, and leave me with it as long as I like. And such a heavenly picture as one of them is! Mary Magdalene and St. Catherine of Siena, both kneeling, the pure pale clear sky far away behind, and the auburn hair of the Magdalene, hardly undulating but falling straight beside the pale, pure cheek (as in the middle ages), and then across the sky in golden lines like light. Well, from San Romano, I go to the Duomo, where there is a most delicious old Sacristan, with the enthusiasm of Jonathan Oldbuck,<sup>1</sup> and his knowledge to boot, and perfectly enraptured to get anybody to listen to him while he reads or repeats (for he knows them all by heart) the quaint inscriptions graven everywhere in Latin (dark, obsolete-lettered Latin) and interprets the emblems on the carved walls. After two hours' work of this kind, and writing—as I go—all I can learn about the history of the churches, and all my picture criticism, I go home to dine—dinner being ready at two exactly. At three I am again ready to set to work, and then I sit in the open, warm, afternoon air, drawing the rich ornaments on the façade of St. Michele. . . . [Here follows the description of that church, given in Vol. III. p. 206.]

After working at this till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past five or so, I give up for the day, and walk for exercise round the ramparts. There, as you know, I have the Pisan mountains, the noble peaks of Carrara, and the Apennines towards Parma, all burning in the sunset, or purple and dark against it, and the olive woods towards Massa, and the wide, rich, viny plain towards Florence, the Apennines still loaded with snow, and purple in the green sky, and the clearness of the sky here is something miraculous. No romance can be too high flown for it; it passes fable.

<sup>1</sup> *The Antiquary* was always a favourite with Ruskin: see *Fiction Fair and Foul*, §§ 24, 35, 38.