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The influence of John Ruskin (1819–1900), both on his own time and on artistic and social developments in the twentieth century, cannot be over-stated. He changed Victorian perceptions of art, and was the main influence behind ‘Gothic revival’ architecture. As a social critic, he argued for the improvement of the condition of the poor, and against the increasing mechanisation of work in factories, which he believed was dull and soul-destroying. The thirty-nine volumes of the Library Edition of his works, published between 1903 and 1912, are themselves a remarkable achievement, in which his books and essays – almost all highly illustrated – are given a biographical and critical context in extended introductory essays and in the ‘Minor Ruskiniana’ – extracts from letters, articles and reminiscences both by and about Ruskin. This sixth volume contains Volume 4 of *Modern Painters*.

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# The Works of John Ruskin

VOLUME 6: MODERN PAINTERS IV

JOHN RUSKIN  
EDITED BY EDWARD TYAS COOK  
AND ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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VOLUME VI

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VOLUME IV

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# MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME IV

CONTAINING

PART V

OF MOUNTAIN BEAUTY

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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<sup>1</sup> [In this edition reproduced in most cases by photogravure; see note on p. xiii.]<sup>2</sup> [This Plate contains seven figures, as follow: (1), (2), (3) the Towers of Fribourg; (1) as Dürer would have drawn them, (2) from a daguerreotype, (3) as a modern sketcher of the "bold" school would draw them: see pp. 46, 82, 102; (4) contour of the top of the Breven: see pp. 54, 282; (5), (6), and (7) pillars, illustrating the conditions of light and shade, characteristic of Rembrandt, Turner, and Veronese respectively: see p. 59.]

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<sup>1</sup> [This Plate contains four figures, as follow : (1) Mont Blanc from Geneva : see p. 201 ; (2) top of the ridge of the Charmoz : see p. 234 ; (3) a spur of the Aiguille Blaitière : see p. 481 ; (4) the Dent de Morcles : see pp. 192, 200.]

<sup>2</sup> [So called by Ruskin in the List of Plates ; the Plate itself is entitled "The Aiguille Charmoz."]

<sup>3</sup> [A portion of Turner's "Pass of Faido" : see Plate 21.]

<sup>4</sup> [For Plate 12, the etching which is mezzotinted in this Plate, see the preceding volume, p. 395.]

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Of the Plates added in this edition, A has previously appeared (in autotype) in the large-paper edition of *Studies in Ruskin*, 1890, Plate iv.

Several of the drawings from which the Plates were engraved have been exhibited at the Coniston Exhibition, 1900; the Ruskin Exhibition at the Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours, 1901; and the Ruskin Exhibition at Manchester, 1904. The frontispiece was at Manchester, No. 151. No. 20 was at Coniston, No. 104; at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 320; at Manchester, No. 150. No. 26 was at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 381; at Manchester, No. 233. No. 28 was at Manchester, No. 75. No. 31 was at Coniston, No. 72; at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 228; at Manchester, No. 333. No. 34 was at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 3; at Manchester, No. 237. No. 35 was at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 79. No. 37 was at Coniston, No. 105; at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 86; at Manchester, No. 146. No. 40 was at Manchester, No. 50. No. 12A was at Coniston, No. 102; at Manchester, No. 168. No. 46 was at Coniston, No. 110; at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 194. A was at the Society of Painters in Water Colours, No. 362.



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## INTRODUCTION TO VOL. VI

THE Fourth Volume of *Modern Painters* was, as already explained, written and published much at the same time as the Third. It has, therefore, been dealt with generally in the preceding Introduction. Some particular remarks remain, however, to be made as usual under the heads of *Text*, *Manuscripts*, and *Illustrations*.

The *Text* of this volume will be found to differ considerably from that of any preceding edition, and for the first time stands as the author finally intended. The alterations now made come from three sources: (1) Ruskin's own copy for revision; (2) a copy formerly belonging to Ruskin, and now to Mr. R. H. Edmundson, of Byerswood, Windermere, in which the author had made some notes and corrections; (3) the published text of *Coeli Enarrant* and *In Montibus Sanctis*, and a proof which Ruskin had carefully revised for an intended further chapter in the latter work (see below, p. 135 *n.*).

The bibliographical particulars of these two series of reprints from *Modern Painters* have already been given (Vol. III. pp. lxii., lxiii.). The portions of the reprints which attach themselves to the present volume are (1) the Preface to *Coeli Enarrant*. This contains some general remarks by the author on the style and substance of volume iv., and is accordingly here reprinted in an appendix (pp. 486, 487). (2) The first chapter of *Coeli Enarrant*, being a reprint of ch. vi. of volume iv. Here the author made no revision. (3) Chapters ii. and iii. of *In Montibus Sanctis*, being respectively ch. vii. and the first portion of ch. viii. of volume iv.; it is the rest of ch. viii. which was put into print and revised by Ruskin for an intended later part of the same book. These portions of volume iv. were considerably revised; and notes and postscripts were added. The notes will here be found in their several places (*e.g.*, pp. 116, 121, 128, 130, 131);<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the notes added from *Frondes Agrestes*, see the explanation (which applies to this volume also) given in Vol. V. p. lxi.

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for the postscripts, see pp. 127, 144. The textual revisions are all enumerated, or referred to, in the usual list of *Variae Lectiones* (pp. xxix.–xxxi.).

These textual revisions and explanatory notes occur in chapters of *Modern Painters* to which the author attached particular importance. He considered the mountain-chapters in this volume to be, as we have seen,<sup>1</sup> among the most valuable of all his writings. He here suggests that some of the passages in question “should be read to young people by their tutors as an introduction to geological study.”<sup>2</sup> Fortunate are the young people who are allowed so attractive a guide; for apart from all questions of geological theory, Ruskin’s chapters have the unquestionable interest and value which attach to the direct observations of a singularly acute eye. “Precisely the same faculties of eye and mind are concerned,” he says elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> “in the analysis of natural and of pictorial forms.” Ruskin, as Mr. Collingwood observes, knew “more about scenery than most geologists, and more about geology than most artists.”<sup>4</sup> Ruskin’s classification of rocks into “crystallines” and “coherents” was adopted, it may be remarked, by Professor Bonney in his *Alpine Regions of Switzerland* (1868); in quoting many passages from the present volume, he truly describes it as “a book that no lover of the Alps should be without.” In an obituary notice of Ruskin in 1900, the President of the Geological Society referred in like manner to “his services to our science in directing the attention of artists and others to the effect of geological structure and of the characters of rocks on scenery,” and instanced the fourth volume of *Modern Painters* as a work that “might be read with advantage by many geologists.”<sup>5</sup> Ruskin, it should be remembered, was here also, as in much else of his work, somewhat of a pioneer. Professor Alphonse Favre’s study of the Savoy mountains<sup>6</sup> did not appear till 1867, and Professor Heim’s *Mechanismus der Gebirgsbildung* (on which Lord Avebury’s *Scenery of Switzerland*, 1896, is founded) not till 1878.

Here, as in some other subjects of inquiry, Ruskin’s study was not specialised and systematic; but in this case it was sustained and never absent from his mind. Many passages from his diaries, already cited,

<sup>1</sup> Vol. V. p. lvii., and see below, p. 486.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 128, author’s note of 1885.

<sup>3</sup> Postscript to chapter i. of *In Montibus Sanctis*, reprinted in a later volume of this edition.

<sup>4</sup> *Life of Ruskin*, 1900, p. 205.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Address by the President, William Whitaker, F.R.S., May 1900; *Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society*, vol. 56, pp. lx.–lxi.

<sup>6</sup> For some references by Ruskin to this work, see his Introduction to W. G. Collingwood’s *Limestone Alps of Savoy*.

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show how constant was his interest in geology,<sup>1</sup> and it should here be added that the diaries, to which he referred in writing the present volume, contain innumerable memoranda, calculations, diagrams, and sketches.<sup>2</sup> He was also, as in later volumes we shall have further occasion to remark, a great collector of mineralogical specimens. The hammer was as inseparable a companion of his mountain rambles as the note-book and the paint-box. There is hardly a page of his diaries in Switzerland which does not contain, each day, notes of specimens collected.

Ruskin's geological speculations are noticed in the Introduction to a later volume in which his papers on geology and mineralogy are collected. Here, however, it should be observed that while the present chapters contain some theoretical remarks to which he afterwards came to attach particular importance—as, for instance, his contention with regard to the stability of existing rock structure (see p. 486 *n.*), in other respects they show adherence, in some measure, to current views which he afterwards very emphatically controverted. This is especially the case with regard to the erosive power both of water and of glaciers; see the author's notes on pp. 116, 122, 127.

The *manuscripts* of this volume to which the editors have had access are those now in the possession of Mr. Pierpont Morgan (formerly in that of Mr. G. Allen). They consist of (1) a volume containing, with several chapters of volume iii. (see Vol. V. p. 433), an early draft of the following chapters: ch. xvii., §§ 39 to end; ch. ii. §§ 5–9; ch. i. §§ 2 to end; ch. iii.; ch. iv.; ch. v.; ch. iii. §§ 1–22; ch. iv. §§ 3 to end; ch. v.; ch. iv. §§ 2–4; ch. v. §§ 1–5. These contents are here enumerated in the order in which the MS. sheets were bound up, and the reader will observe that some portions are duplicated; the enumeration thus illustrates the extensive process of rewriting and re-arranging which the book went through. (2) On 200 foolscap leaves, the MS. at a later stage of chs. i., vi.–xii., xiv.–xvi., xix. (3) Annotated proofs of chs. iii., iv., v.; portions of chs. xi. and xii.; ch. xiii.–xix. (with some omissions), and the appendices. The first draft contains a good deal of matter which was ultimately discarded; the author included a portion of a discarded chapter in an appendix (see below, p. 479), in which also he explains his reasons for omitting

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Vol. V. p. xxviii.

<sup>2</sup> Some of his numerous geological drawings were shown in the Ruskin Exhibition at Manchester, 1904.

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much that he had written. Of some portions of the book (notably of chs. xiii. and xx.) there is no MS.

An examination of these various MSS. and proofs shows that the present volume, which contains many of Ruskin's finest passages, was also among the writings which gave him most trouble, and were most carefully polished and revised. As has been already said, the author had the two volumes (iii. and iv.) in hand at once, and at first they were to have been but one. It may be interesting, as showing how the theme grew under treatment, to give from the first draft his list of proposed contents:—

- “Ch. 1. Greatness of Style.  
 2. Realization.  
 3. Of Great Art.  
 4. Of False Religious Ideal.  
 5. Of False Profane Ideal.  
 6. Of True Purist Ideal.  
 7. Of True Naturalist Ideal.  
 8. Of True Grotesque Ideal.  
 9. Of Finish.  
 10. Of Imitation.  
 11. Of Landscape Purist Ideal.  
 12. Of Landscape Naturalist Ideal.  
 13. Of Landscape Grotesque Ideal.  
 14. Of Turner's Colour.  
 15. Of Turner's Chiaroscuro.  
 16. Of Turner's Drawing, as dependent on Effects of Distance.  
 17. Of Turner's Drawing, as dependent on Love of Mystery.  
 18. Of the Meaning of Landscape.  
 19. The Firmament.  
 20. The Dry Land.  
 21. The Utilities of Mountains.  
 22. The Moral of Mountains.  
 23. The Materials of Mountains.  
 24. The Sculpture of Mountains.  
 25. Corollaries.”

It would be tedious to trace the author's revisions from page to page; but it will be instructive perhaps to select a few well-known passages and exemplify his processes of what he calls “working up.”<sup>1</sup> We take first the description of the old tower of Calais Church, to

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. XII. p. xxxi.



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which reference has already been made.<sup>1</sup> The following was the first draft of § 2:—

“The large neglect, the noble unsightliness of it; the decay and record of its years written so visibly upon it, yet without danger, sign of weakness, or decay; the stern, meagre massiveness and quiet gloom of its poverty; gnawed away by the channel winds, and overgrown with the black and bitter sea grasses; stripped of all comeliness as if by a blight; its slates and tiles all shaken and rent, and yet not falling; its brickwork full of bolts and holes and grisly fissures, and yet stable like a bare brown rock; its stripped barrenness and desertness; its utter carelessness of what regards it or thinks of it in passing by; putting forth no claim upon us; having no beauty, nor desirableness, nor pride, nor grace, and yet asking for no pity, neither; it is not like ruins, pensive, piteous, feebly or fondly garrulous of its better days and yet useless; but useful still, going through its own daily work, as some old fisherman beaten grey by storm, yet drawing his daily net; so it stands with no memory of its youth, nor sweetness, tenderness of age, complaint of its past nor wofulness; but in blanched and meagre massiveness and serviceableness, gathering souls together beneath it; the sound of its bells for prayer still rolling through its rents; and the grey peak of it seen far across the sea, principal of the three that rise above the waste of surfy sand and hillocked shore—the lighthouse, for Life and Death; and the Hall belfry, for Labour and Rest; and this Church Tower, for Praise.”

The passage went through many intermediate shapes before its final form was arrived at; but comparing this first form, with the last, the reader will note how the author omitted superfluous words, pared down alliterations, and knit the sounds together into closer harmony with the sense. Mr. Frederic Harrison, in a careful analysis of Ruskin's literary *technique*, has observed how much the author relies upon *assonance* for his effect; meaning by assonance, as distinct from alliteration, “the recurrence of the same, or of cognate sounds, not merely in the first letter of words, but where the stress comes, in any part of a word, and that in sounds whether vowel or consonant.”<sup>2</sup> The passage just given is cited in illustration, and it is interesting to note that, while some of the effects in question—as, for instance, the expressive phrase “the sound . . . rolling through its rents”—were written down at once, others were obtained after many retouchings—

<sup>1</sup> Vol. V. p. xxxi.

<sup>2</sup> “Ruskin as Master of Prose,” in *Tennyson, Ruskin, Mill, and other Literary Estimates*, 1899, p. 62.

as, for instance, in the last words, with the triple alliteration, the second of them being inverted (“*belfry for labour*”). To such analysis as this—most instructive to the student, and similar to that which the critic himself applied to Turner’s compositions—Ruskin would perhaps have remarked, in the words which, as he mentions, were used by Tennyson when some one pointed out to the poet various laws deducible from his versification: “It’s all true; I do observe them, but I never knew it.”<sup>1</sup>

Another passage in this volume is cited by the same critic for its majestic effect as a whole, and for its incidental felicities—the account of the peasants of the Valais, in the chapter on “The Mountain Gloom” (ch. xix. § 4, pp. 388–389, below). Here, again, the first draft will repay careful comparison with the final version in the text:—

*“They know not the name of beauty nor of knowledge. They know dimly that of virtue. Love, patience, hospitality, truth, faith,—these things they know so far as they can be known. To glean their meadows side by side, so happier; to bear the bitter frost and burden up the breathless mountain side, without murmuring; to bid the stranger drink from their vessel of milk; to look dimly forward; to see at the foot of their low death-beds the form of a pale figure upon a cross, dying patiently as they; all this separates them from the cattle and the stones; of all this they are capable; but in all this unrewarded as far as concerns this present life. For them there is neither hope nor action of spirit; for them no progress or joy. Hard roof, dark night, laborious day, thirst, weary arms at sunset; these are their life. No books, no thoughts, no change of passion. Only sometimes a day of rest and a little sitting in the sun under the church wall as the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air; a pattering of a few prayers, not understood, in the dark chapel; an evening spent by the more sober in a vague act of adoration, and so back to the sombre home, with the cloud upon them still unbroken—a strange cloud of rocky gloom, heavy and hopeless, born out of the wild torrents and shapeless stones, and unlightened, even in their religion, except by the hope of some better thing unknown, mingled with threatening, and obscured by an unspeakable horror,—a feverish scent as it were of martyrdom and torture mingled with the incense, a perpetual memory of shattered bodies and warped wills, and lamenting spirits and hurtling flames—the very cross, for them, bedragged more deeply with goutts of blood than for others.”*

The words here printed in italics were either omitted, altered, or transposed in the ultimate text; and if the reader will compare the

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. XII. p. 500.

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latter with this early draft, he will perceive how much the total effect was enhanced, and how many of the felicities by the way were introduced, during the author's revision. Some of these—the onomatopœic line, for instance, “as the bell tolls thin and far in the mountain air”—were thought of at once; but observe how different and more simple is the effect of “to bear the burden up the mountain flank, un-murmuringly,” than in the first version; or note how the closing words—“the very cross, for them, dashed more deeply than for others, with gout of blood”—have gained by a simple transposition, and the alteration of the word “bedragged.” Ruskin spared no labour, to assist his mastery of language and intuitive sense for melody; it is one of the purposes of the notes in this edition to illustrate his labour; but no less do they illustrate the fact that the style was the man, that his words came from the heart, that what some imagine to be mere literary artifice was the expression of acute and sympathetic observation.<sup>1</sup>

Two *facsimiles* of Ruskin's MS. (in its final form) are given in this volume. The first (pp. 120–121) is from ch. vii. § 4; the second (pp. 296–297) from ch. xvi. § 22; the latter is here included as having appeared in the supplement (October 1893) of *Illustrations to the Bibliography of the Writings in Prose and Verse of John Ruskin, LL.D.*, edited by T. J. Wise.

The *illustrations* prepared by Ruskin for this volume were especially numerous and important. They consisted of thirty-five engraved plates, and 116 woodcuts. A list of the woodcuts is for the first time given in this edition. Here, more than in any previous volume, illustrations and text were, in many chapters, inter-dependent. “All my half-volume,” he says in ch. xviii. (§ 23), “is abstracted” in two drawings by Turner, which he included in his illustrations. He refers to the “Goldau,” and more especially to the “Pass of Faido,”<sup>2</sup> from which the frontispiece, among other illustrations, was engraved. So much in the volume turns upon this drawing, that it may be useful here to describe its history in relation to Ruskin's many and varied studies in it. Turner's first sketch of the scene was made in 1842; it is now among the sketches lent by the Trustees of the National Gallery to the Ruskin Drawing School at Oxford (see Vol. XIII.). The drawing from it was executed in 1843 as a commission from Ruskin (see Epilogue to Ruskin's *Notes on his Drawings by Turner* in the same volume).

<sup>1</sup> Compare Ruskin's Preface to *Coeli Enarrant*, below, p. 486.

<sup>2</sup> See, in this connexion, ch. xvii. § 43, pp. 354–355.

Ruskin was full of admiration for it, and one of his principal purposes in his Continental journey in 1845, was to find the scene depicted by the artist. (See Introduction to Vol. IV. pp. xxiv. *n.*, xxv., xxxv.). He spent some days at Faïdo, sketching the spot and noting the processes of selection and invention followed by Turner (see Introduction to Vol. V. pp. xvi., xvii.). One of Ruskin's sketches of the actual scene was shown in the Ruskin Exhibition at Manchester in 1904 (No. 150). In 1852, on his way back from Venice, Ruskin again visited the scene (Vol. X. p. xlii.). And now observe the quantity of study which, founded on these personal observations, he put into his analysis of Turner's drawing. He had sketched the spot. From these sketches he etched a topographical outline (Plate 20 in this volume, between pp. 34 and 35). He made "a careful translation into black and white" of the left-hand upper part of Turner's drawing; this was also exhibited at Manchester (No. 146, upper drawing). He etched the same portion for this volume (Plate 37, opposite p. 269, "Crests of the Slaty Crystallines"). Again, he traced the leading lines in this portion of the drawing (Fig. 70, p. 272). He made a reduced outline of the whole drawing, exhibited at Manchester (No. 146, lower drawing), and etched it (Plate 21, between pp. 34 and 35). Finally, he copied the central portion of the drawing to be engraved as the frontispiece to this volume ("The Gates of the Hills"); Ruskin's drawing for this engraving was also exhibited at Manchester (No. 151).<sup>1</sup>

The reader should note, in view of frequent references to the drawing in Ruskin's books, that it is sometimes called "The Gates of the Hills," sometimes "The Pass of Faïdo," but more often "The St. Gothard." The detailed study given to this drawing is very characteristic of him. What he preached, he had practised. "Foolish and ambitious persons," he says, "think they can form their judgment by seeing much art of all kinds. . . . To have well studied one picture by Tintoret, one by Luini, one by Angelico, and a couple of Turner's drawings, will teach a man more than to have catalogued all the galleries of Europe."<sup>2</sup>

The labour in preparing so many illustrations as this volume contained was, as will readily be understood, very great. But there was much more of it than appears on the surface. It was only after

<sup>1</sup> Ruskin also commissioned Mr. Arthur Severn to make a copy of Turner's drawing (Manchester Exhibition, No. 147), "made under the direction of Mr. Ruskin, who paid the artist a hundred guineas for it, and declared when the original and the copy were placed together that he should never know them apart."

<sup>2</sup> *Notes on his Drawings by Turner*, 17-19 r. (Vol. XIII.).

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experiments in another kind that Ruskin decided to go to the expense of so many steel-plates. This appears from a note by Mr. Allen which was printed in the *Bibliography* (ii. 33), above referred to:—

“I recollect in 1858 Mr. Ruskin asking me to dispose of a large number of plain wood blocks for which he no longer had any use; at the same time telling me that he had obtained them for *Modern Painters*, intending to illustrate that work mainly by woodcuts. He also gave me some blocks drawn upon by himself, which I have to this day. One of these was the subject of Plate 31, vol. iv., “The Aiguille Blaitière” from the same point of view.”<sup>1</sup>

Having once decided on steel-engravings, Ruskin spared no trouble and expense in making them as perfect as possible. Some remarks by Mr. J. H. Le Keux, the engraver of many of the best plates, illustrate this point:—

“Mr. Ruskin never fixed a price; I charged what I liked; he never complained—in fact, offered more. One Plate, ‘The Tree Stump of Claude,’ he said I had made *too good*, having put in too much touch. I promised to alter it. On my next visit I took him another proof which is the Plate printed. He asked me how I had altered it so well. I told him I had not altered the Plate, but had engraved another, as it was much less trouble than scraping out and altering. ‘Then charge me for both plates,’ was his request. I did so. Mr. Ruskin was especially pleased with ‘The Moat of Nuremberg.’ The tree stem of Albert Dürer, reproduced line for line in the Plate of tree stems, he thought a marvel.”<sup>2</sup>

In the present edition it has been necessary, owing to the size of the page, to reduce most of the original plates by photogravure; the scale of reduction is about one-fourth. The following plates are, however, printed from the originals:—Nos. 20, 24, 28, 40, 41, and 48.

The *figures* are printed from the original wood-blocks, with the exception of *Fig. 17* (p. 193), which has been necessarily reduced to fit the page.

Two additional plates are introduced, being photogravures from drawings by Ruskin, which illustrate the chapter on “The Mountain Gloom.”

<sup>1</sup> These blocks, drawn on by Ruskin, were exhibited at Manchester in 1904 (Nos. 528–534); they were never cut.

<sup>2</sup> Again from the *Bibliography*, ii. 34. “The Tree Stump of Claude” is Plate 4 in vol. iii. (“Ramification according to Claude”); the “Moat of Nuremberg” is Plate 76 in vol. v.; the “tree stem of Dürer,” Fig. 9 in Plate 2 in vol. iii.

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Plate A is of one of the old bridges—the Kapellbrücke—at Lucerne (see p. 394). The drawing, which is in water colours ( $7\frac{3}{8} \times 11\frac{1}{2}$ ), is at Oxford (Educational Series, No. 116).

Plate B is from a drawing in the collection of Sir John Simon, K.C.B.; called by Ruskin “Mountain Gloom: near St. Jean de Maurienne, on the Cenis route.” The drawing is in wash and body-colour on buff paper ( $18 \times 13$ ).

E. T. C.