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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 seventh volume contains Volume 5 of *Modern Painters*.

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The Works of John Ruskin

VOLUME 7: MODERN PAINTERS V

JOHN RUSKIN
EDITED BY EDWARD TYAS COOK
AND ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
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Painted by Fra Angelico

Drawn by J. Ruskin.

Engraved by W. Hall.

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VOLUME V

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MODERN PAINTERS

VOLUME V

COMPLETING THE WORK, AND CONTAINING

PARTS

VI. OF LEAF BEAUTY—VII. OF CLOUD BEAUTY

VIII. OF IDEAS OF RELATION

I. OF INVENTION FORMAL

IX. OF IDEAS OF RELATION

2. OF INVENTION SPIRITUAL

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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¹ [In this edition reproduced in most cases by photogravure : see note on p. xviii.]² [From a drawing by Ruskin of a picture by that artist ; see below, p. 369.]

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¹ [There has been no Plate 77 in any edition : see below, p. lxxii.]² [The above are the pages where the Plates themselves will be found, and where in most cases they are referred to in the text. For the author's other references to the Plates see also :—

For <i>Frontispiece</i> , p. 369	For Plate 69, pp. 145, 167, 173 n.
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Plate 85 (Turner's "Château de Blois") is not referred to in the author's text ; but see p. 203 n.]

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⁴ Ruskin does not state the subject of this woodcut, or otherwise refer to it. In the MS. list of woodcuts it is called "Rising Drift-cloud," Nos. 83-90 on one page.

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Note.—The Frontispiece and Plates—Nos. 55, 70, 72, 76, and 82—are printed from the original steels; Nos. 68 and 80 from the steels engraved by G. Cook for the new edition of 1888. Two of the Plates—56 and 64—are line blocks, reduced from early impressions of the originals. The other Plates are photogravures from early impressions of the originals. Three of them—73, 74, and 86—are the size of the originals; the others are reduced (by about one-fourth) in order to fit the page. The three last Plates—85, 86, 87—were first added in the edition of 1888.

Of the Plates added in this edition, A has previously appeared in *Scribner's Magazine*, December 1898, and the *Magazine of Art*, April 1900; and B in the *Studio*, March 15, 1900.

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. No. 53 (a water-colour, the same size as the original Plate) was at Manchester No. 64. No. 55 (pen and brush, again the same size) was at Coniston No. 132, and at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours, No. 221. No. 68 was at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours No. 218 (the same size, but the sky was altered in engraving). No. 76 was, at the Society also, No. 45 (pen and ink, $12\frac{1}{2} \times 16$). The drawing of Plate A was at the Society of Painters in Water-Colours No. 368, and at Manchester, No. 231. That of Plate B was No. 304 at the Royal Water-Colour Society, and No. 361 at Manchester; that of Plate C was No. 154 at the Royal Water-Colour Society; and that of Plate F was No. 353 at the Royal Water-Colour Society, and No. 129 at Manchester.

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INTRODUCTION TO VOL. VII

(In the chronological order Vol. VI. is followed in succession by Vols. XIII., XIV., XV., and XVI.; the present Introduction should thus be read after that to Vol. XVI.)

THE third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters* were published in January and April 1856; the fifth, and concluding, volume did not appear till June 1860. The causes which led to this delay are glanced at by Ruskin in his Preface to the fifth volume, and they have been more fully described in the Introductions to Volumes XIII.–XVI. The years which intervened were four of the busiest in Ruskin's busy life, and the tasks which occupied him seemed more important at the moment than the completion of his book. He was hard at work, then, on other things; but also he had much to learn before he could see his way to bring his long argument to a conclusion. The book, which began as an essay in defence of a particular painter, had branched forth in many directions, with something of "the Dryad's waywardness"; and though firmly rooted all the while in strong and definite principles, yet his opinions on particular schools and masters were growing, now in this direction, and now in that, while new subjects of inquiry opened out on every side.

The manifold activities which we have traced in Volumes XIII.–XVI. were pursued in the busy world of men; Ruskin was arranging drawings in the National Gallery, criticising the picture exhibitions, teaching drawing, and lecturing in the great manufacturing towns. The completion of *Modern Painters* required a different kind of experience—

"The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

Those other lines from Wordsworth which Ruskin took as his motto in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, and which he reprinted on the title-page of each succeeding volume, were the expression not only of the spirit in which the author undertook his task but of a biographical fact. At each stage in his work *Modern Painters* was the result of his

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“having walked with Nature” and “offered his heart a daily sacrifice to Truth.” It was in the Fairies’ Hollow at Chamouni or among the shade of the Unterwalden pine; in the solitude of the Scottish moors; in the sacred places of Swiss history; or from his study windows, open to the stars and clouds, that Ruskin carried on the studies of natural beauty, and conceived the imaginative fancies and piercing thoughts, which he was afterwards to clothe with literary art. Foreign travel, too, always stimulated his powers. “It is good for me,” he wrote to his father from Turin (July 19, 1858), “to be on the Continent, as I get a sensation every now and then—and knowledge always: in England I can enjoy myself in a quiet way as I can in the garden at home, but I get no strong feeling of any kind.” This Introduction, therefore, will be mainly concerned with his summer tours in 1856, 1857, 1858, and 1859. It is characteristic of Ruskin’s strenuous life that the crowning volume of his principal work should be the fruit of holiday tasks and holiday thoughts.

1856

We left Ruskin in an earlier Introduction¹ as he was about to start in May 1856 for a tour with his parents in Switzerland. He had been through a hard spell of winter’s work in finishing the third and fourth volumes of *Modern Painters*; he must have needed the holiday, and he was in the mood to enjoy it.² The diary shows him in full activity and enthusiasm. At Calais—now how much changed from then!—he finds “for once nothing changed anywhere: the young leaves lovely, and the old spire seen through them.” At Senlis, the view from the cathedral is “quite magnificent, and the clear, crystalline French sunlight like Paradise.” At Nancy he finds the town

“much more beautifully placed than I supposed. The limestone hills above it, with many springs at their feet, rising three or four hundred feet pretty steeply to the higher plains, and wild and broken at the

¹ Vol. XIII. p. xxxi.

² The itinerary of this tour was as follows: Dover (May 14), Calais (May 15), by Lille to Amiens (Hôtel de France, May 17), by Creil to Senlis (May 19), Meaux (May 20), Rheims (May 21), Nancy (May 23), Strasburg (May 24), Bâle (May 30), Montreux (June 4), Berne (June 5), Thun (June 7), Interlachen (June 10), Lauterbrunnen (June 24), Thun (June 26), Berne (July 8), Fribourg (July 9), Vevay (July 15), Geneva (July 21), St. Martin (July 25), Chamouni (July 26), St. Martin (August 19), Geneva (August 20), Fribourg (August 22), Bulle (September 3), Geneva (September 4), St. Laurent (September 8), Dijon (September 10), Fontainebleau (September 12), Paris (September 13), Amiens (September 23), Arras (September 24), Calais (September 25), Dover (September 27), Denmark Hill (October 1). Couttet accompanied Ruskin and his parents, meeting them at Calais.

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tops, richly clothed with the finest flowers of the Polygola Alpina I ever saw, mixed with columbine (lilac-coloured), both in full flower on May 23rd. I walked with Couttet up the sloping path, and saw the hills of the Vosges, far higher than I expected, and looking lovely, the air exquisitely delightful, soft, and pure. Recollect general principle of Furniture colour, brought out by my pretty little bedroom at Nancy, that a pale bluish green ground, with rose, purple, and scarlet flowers on it, and dark wood for woodwork, is as pleasant to the eye—soothing and rich—as it is possible to have it. Nothing could be more delightful than the little room, with its golden green of fresh leafage outside, and breeze through window and fresh green within.”

The travellers went by their old road to Bâle, and spent seven or eight weeks in the towns or on the lakes of Northern Switzerland, in the Bernese Oberland, and at Fribourg. One of the main objects which Ruskin proposed to himself on this tour was a continuation of the intended series of illustrations of Swiss towns, to which we have already referred.¹ The illustrations were to accompany a book on Swiss history, and the diary contains various memoranda of dates and events; to which, in after years, Ruskin added the comment, “Things begun, unfinished: No. 1—Swiss Battles.” The list was destined to become a long one; for Ruskin was for ever planning more schemes than even his prodigious industry and unaffrighted plunges into new subjects could possibly complete. “My father,” he writes of this tour,² “begins to tire of the proposed work on Swiss towns, and to inquire whether the rest of *Modern Painters* will ever be done.” Perhaps he had tired of the historical project a little himself; at any rate, the snows of Chamouni began to call, and in the middle of July the party moved to Vevay, Geneva, St. Martin, and Chamouni. Arrived among the Aiguilles, Ruskin was soon deep in his geological studies: “at work with pickaxe and spade before breakfast,” we read more than once in the diary, “for an hour and a half.” He paid another flying visit to Chamouni in 1858, and was there again for a few days in 1859; but this, in 1856, was the longest of the visits which immediately preceded the fifth volume of *Modern Painters*. He visited all his favourite haunts—the Fairies’ Hollow at Châtelard, the Breven, and the rest; he was very busy with his sketch-book, and noted, as well as drew, the movements of the clouds among the mountains. At Chamouni Ruskin met his friend

¹ Vol. V. p. xxxii.

² *Præterita*, ii. ch. i. § 11.

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Layard,¹ and heard from him, no doubt, the story of his researches among the decaying frescoes of Italy.

It was on this occasion also that Ruskin made one of his most valued friendships. In the autumn of 1855 Professor Charles Eliot Norton had presented an introduction to Ruskin and been shown the Turners at Denmark Hill. In the following summer he was in Switzerland with his mother and sisters, and the two parties happened to meet on the Lake of Geneva; they arranged to meet again at St. Martin, "and thus," says Ruskin, "I became possessed of my second friend, after Dr. John Brown, and of my first real tutor, Charles Eliot Norton."² Ruskin in the same place has given an impression of Professor Norton and expressed his obligations to his friend. Here is Professor Norton's picture of Ruskin, as he showed himself at this time:—

"His abundant light-brown hair, his blue eyes, and his fresh complexion gave him a young look for his age [37]; he was a little above middle height, his figure was slight, his movements were quick and alert, and his whole air and manner had a definite and attractive individuality. There was nothing in him of the common English reserve and stiffness, and no self-consciousness or sign of consideration of himself as a man of distinction, but rather, on the contrary, a seeming self-forgetfulness and an almost feminine sensitiveness and readiness of sympathy. His features were irregular, but the lack of beauty in his countenance was made up for by the kindness of his look, and the expressiveness of his full and mobile lips. . . . The tone of dogmatism and of arbitrary assertion too often manifest in his writing was entirely absent from his talk. In spite of all that he had gone through of suffering, in spite of the burden of his thought, and the weight of his renown, he had often an almost boyish gaiety of spirit and liveliness of humour, and always a quick interest in whatever might be the subject of the moment. He never quarrelled with a difference of opinion, and was apt to attribute only too much value to a judgment that did not coincide with his own. I have not a memory of these days in which I recall him except as one of the pleasantest, gentlest, kindest, and most interesting of men."³

Among the immediate benefits which Professor Norton conferred on Ruskin was an introduction to the works of Lowell. He "must be a

¹ "At Chamouni," writes Layard (August 12, 1856), "I fell in with Ruskin, and enjoyed a walk with him on the glaciers; he is always eloquent and agreeable" (*Autobiography*, vol. ii. p. 209). In the autumn of 1855, and again in that of 1856, Layard made the tours which he described to the Arundel Society in 1857: see Vol. XVI. p. 448; and compare *ibid.*, p. 76 n.

² *Præterita*, iii. ch. ii. § 46.

³ *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1904, vol. 93, pp. 577, 581; republished (with slight alterations) in *Letters of John Ruskin to Charles Eliot Norton*, Boston, 1904, vol. i. p. 5.

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noble fellow," wrote Ruskin, who in this volume (below, p. 451) refers to the poet as his dear teacher.

"He seemed to me," adds Professor Norton, "cheerful rather than happy. The deepest currents of his life ran out of sight." There was, for one thing, no longer that complete inward unity which is necessary to happiness; Ruskin was beginning, as we have seen, to outgrow the simple and assured religious faith of his childhood and early manhood. Then, again, more and more, as the years went by, he was to be oppressed by the contrast between the beauty of the world of nature and the hardness of the human lot, the blindness, the indifference, or the folly of mankind towards the things which pertain to their peace. The responsibilities of human life, the shortness of the allotted span, as measured by the infinity of things to be learnt and to be done, weighed heavily upon a man whose curiosity was as unbounded as his versatility. There is a Sunday meditation in his diary of this period (Geneva, September 7, 1856) which reveals some of the inner currents of Ruskin's life. He makes a numerical "calculation of the number of days which under perfect term of human life I might have to live." He works the sum out to 11,795, and for some years onward the days in his diary are noted by the diminishing numbers.¹ They who most redeem the time are often most conscious that they are but unprofitable servants. Ruskin acted more than most men on the proverb *Nulla dies sine linea*; but entries such as this—"11,793. Nothing much learned to-day"²—are not infrequent in his diary. Throughout this tour of 1856 he was, however, constantly at work, not only drawing, observing, geologising, but also, in accordance with his invariable custom, reading; and by reading Ruskin meant reading, marking, learning. The diary of this summer shows him busy, among other things, with notes on the morality of *Redgauntlet*, and with an analysis and collation of all the texts in the Bible relating to Conduct and Faith. In the evenings he read aloud to his mother, selecting on this occasion several of George Sand's stories; on these also he made critical notes.

There were times when Ruskin found among the mountains the mood which is described by Wordsworth:—

"That blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,

¹ With some interruptions from ill-health, the "perfect term of human life" was allotted to Ruskin; he was 70 in 1889, which was in fact the end of his working years.

² The same remark occurs in his diary of March 31, 1840. He had then begun to keep a diary in which to jot down what he learnt each day.

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In which the heavy and the weary weight
 Of all this unintelligible world,
 Is lightened :—that serene and blessed mood,
 In which the affections gently lead us on,—
 Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul :
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.”

This feeling was frequent with Ruskin, and it inspired many a page in *Modern Painters* ; but it was not constant. The very exquisiteness of his sensibility may have fatigued him, and made him impatient for change. Two extracts from the same page in his diary reflect the changes of mood :—

“*Sept.* 9.—The air at St. Laurent this morning was so soft that it seemed to have passed through warm eiderdown or been breathed by angels before it was sent down to us. The shingle-covered houses, of quaint, yet rude shapes, have a strange grey-hooded, half monkish, half wood-pigeon-like modesty of rural wildness about them, quite different from the pretentious cottages of Berne.”

“*September* 11, DIJON.—I cannot understand why in a sunny walk through these streets and a suburb more like a village in the neighbourhood of Oxford than a French one, I should have had more pleasure this afternoon than in my walks about Fribourg, or in Chamouni. (Perhaps as one gets older human nature interests one more; perhaps there are very happy associations connected with this place; perhaps the mere change may be pleasant, I having never stopped long enough in these French towns to get tired of them, and the human nature here is much more piquant and varied, and, in most cases, pleasing in aspect, than cottage life.) But so it was: I certainly would not have changed the streets for any mountain glen.”

1857

From Dijon Ruskin returned to Paris, where he again spent several days in studying the pictures at the Louvre.¹ He was home early in October, and plunged at once into some of that various work which is described in other volumes. Turner's pictures and drawings had

¹ Compare Vol. XII. pp. 448–473.

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now come into the possession of the nation. Ruskin examined them and wrote to the *Times* offering to arrange the drawings (Vol. XIII. pp. xxxii., 81–85). The pictures were soon exhibited at Marlborough House: Ruskin wrote a catalogue of them (*ibid.*, pp. xxxiii., 89–181). In order to show how he proposed to arrange the drawings, he wrote a catalogue of One Hundred of them (*ibid.*, pp. xxxiii., 183–226). His classes at the Working Men's College simultaneously claimed his attention; and, as an off-shoot from this work, he wrote during the winter of 1856–1857 *The Elements of Drawing* (Vol. XV.). At the beginning of the new year he was further engaged in lecturing (see Vol. XVI. p. xviii.). A sufficiently busy time, it will be seen; yet he always found leisure both to see his friends and to write to them—as will sufficiently appear from the letters of this period collected in a later volume. The spring and summer of 1857 brought fresh tasks. There were his *Academy Notes* to be written (Vol. XIV.); and in July the Manchester lectures on *The Political Economy of Art* were delivered (Vol. XVI.).

Ruskin may well have needed a holiday by this time, and—after a visit to Sir Walter and Lady Trevelyan at Wallington—he was taken off by his parents to the Highlands (July to October). Of this tour no diary has been found. The short sketch which Ruskin gives of it in his autobiography¹ suggests that he was not too well pleased at being diverted from his favourite haunts among the Alps. But the journey left vivid impressions upon his mind, and was fruitful, both in minute studies of nature and in general observations. The opening pages of *The Two Paths* are eloquent with Ruskin's impressions of a country “stern and wild,” which is devoid of any “valuable monuments of art,” while yet it is the nurse of noble heroism, and is able to “hallow the passions and confirm the principles” of its children “by direct association with the charm, or power, of nature.”² In the present volume, too, there is a passage which records an impression of the same tour.³ Ruskin worked hard during the autumn at drawing. A single drawing at Blair Athol took him, he says, “a week at six hours a day.”⁴ He was here on Turner's ground, and, many years later, in one of his Oxford lectures, when he was discussing the plate of Blair

¹ *Præterita*, iii. ch. i. § 11. Ruskin was at Wallington on July 15; Blair Athol, August 22; Edinburgh and Dunbar, September 14; Penrith, September 25–27. These are the dates on published letters. He went as far north as the Bay of Cromarty (*Præterita*).

² Vol. XVI. pp. 259–261. See also *ibid.*, p. 190.

³ Part ix. ch. ii. § 11 (below, p. 268).

⁴ Vol. XVI. p. xxxviii. The drawing is perhaps one of those in Professor Norton's collection.

Athol in *Liber Studiorum*, his memory went back to every detail of the scene, as he had observed and sketched it in 1857.¹ In the same lecture he noticed others of Turner's Scottish subjects which he himself had examined on the spot.² The drawing here reproduced of a foreground scene at Killiecrankie belongs to the same visit, and will serve to show the minuteness of Ruskin's work; in which respect it should be compared with the similar study at Glenfinlas, made four years earlier.³

Ruskin hurried back from Scotland on receiving official intimation that the Trustees of the National Gallery had decided to entrust the arrangement of the Turner drawings to him.⁴ This was his main work during the ensuing months, and it was very heavy (Vol. XIII.). But he also revised for publication the lectures on *The Political Economy of Art*, and wrote the Addenda to them (Vol. XVI. pp. 105–139). Work for *Modern Painters*, though it was put on one side, did not pass from his mind, and during this autumn of 1857 he made many studies of "Cloud Beauty." He once said that he "bottled skies" as carefully as his father bottled sherries; here, from his diary, are some samples:—

"October 28 [1857].—A grey morning with filmy tracery of hair-cloud, heavy dew—white horizontal mist among trees in walking—open into soft blue sky—with cirri and quiet air."

"November 1. 11,442.—A vermilion morning at last, all waves of soft scarlet, sharp at edge, and gradated to purple and grey scud moving slowly beneath it from the south-west, heaps of grey cumuli—between the scud and cirrus—at horizon [sketch]. It issued in an exquisite day—a little more cold and turn to east in wind; but clear and soft. All purple and blue in distance, and misty sunshine near on the trees, and green fields. Very green they are—the fields, that is; and the trees hardly yet touched on the Norwood western hillside with autumn colour. Note the exquisite effect of the golden leaves scattered on the blue sky, and the horse-chestnut, thin and small, dark against them in stars [sketch]."

"November 3. 11,440.—Dawn purple, flushed, delicate. Bank of grey cloud, heavy at six [sketch]. Then the lighted purple cloud showing through it, open sky of dull yellow above—all grey, and darker scud going across it obliquely, from the south-west—moving fast, yet never stirring from its place, at last melting away. It expands into a sky of brassy flaked light on grey—passes away into grey morning."

¹ See *Lectures on Landscape*, § 36.

² See below, Preface, § 1, p. 3.

³ Vol. XII. p. xxvi. (Plate I.).

⁴ See Vol. XIII. p. xxxv.

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A



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Rock at Killiecrankie

1857