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John Ruskin

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The Works of John Ruskin

VOLUME 19: 'THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA' AND
'THE QUEEN OF THE AIR', WITH OTHER
PAPERS AND LECTURES

JOHN RUSKIN
EDITED BY EDWARD TYAS COOK
AND ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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JOHN RUSKIN

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JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



LONDON

GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD

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VOLUME XIX

THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA
AND
THE QUEEN OF THE AIR
WITH OTHER PAPERS AND LECTURES
ON ART AND LITERATURE
1860-1870

THE CESTUS OF AGLAIA
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Note.—Of the drawings reproduced in this volume, six have appeared before. No. VIII. was reproduced by autotype process as Plate I. in the large-paper edition of E. T. Cook's *Studies in Ruskin*; and, by half-tone process, in the *Magazine of Art*, April 1900. No. XIX. was Plate I. (chromolithograph) in *Verona and Other Lectures* (1894). No. XXI. was Plate X. in the same book, and No. XXII. was Plate VI. The two subjects included in No. XXIV. were Plates VII. and VIII. in the same book, and No. XXV. was Plate V.

Of the drawings, those of the *frontispiece* and of Plates VI. and VII. are permanently exhibited on the walls of the Ruskin Drawing School, Oxford, while others are in the cabinets of the same collection. That of Plate VIII. was shown at the Ruskin Exhibition at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, 1901 (No. 6), and at the Ruskin Exhibition, Manchester, 1904 (No. 306); that of Plate XII. was No. 216 at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, and No. 437 in the Bradford Exhibition of 1904; that of Plate XIX. was No. 232 at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours, No. 313 at Manchester, and No. 172 in the Coniston Exhibition of 1900; that of Plate XX. was No. 439 at Bradford; that of Plate XXI. (in the collection of Mr. T. F. Taylor) was No. 312 at Manchester; that of Plate XXII. was No. 116 at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours; of those in Plate XXIV., the Madonna (in the collection of Mr. T. F. Taylor) was No. 316 at Manchester, and the Can Grande was No. 264 at the Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colours.

XIX.

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INTRODUCTION TO VOL. XIX

THIS is a volume of miscellanies, collecting the papers and a book written by Ruskin on artistic and literary subjects between 1865 and 1869, together with one paper of an earlier date. It contains three lectures of considerable interest which have not hitherto been published, and presents in a complete form a series of papers on the laws of art, hitherto so attainable only in the back numbers of a periodical.

The contents of the volume, which are arranged chronologically, are as follow:—

I. A paper on *Sir Joshua and Holbein*, which originally appeared in the *Cornhill Magazine* for March 1860.—This is a chapter which was crowded out from the last volume of *Modern Painters*, and recalls in style and treatment the chapters in that volume which contrast Dürer and Salvator, Wouvermans and Angelico, or Rubens and Paul Veronese. If the reader will compare § 15 of this paper (p. 12) with the chapter in *Modern Painters* describing the difference in the outlook of Dürer and Holbein on the one side, and of Salvator on the other,¹ he will see at once that the passage upon Holbein must have been written at the same time and with the same ideas in the author's mind.

II. A paper on *The Study of Architecture in Schools*, read to the Royal Institute of British Architects on May 15, 1865.—Into this paper Ruskin compressed much that was most deeply felt in his theory of the place of the fine arts in human life, and the discussion which followed the reading of his paper shows the strong impression which it made at the time. "The French word *ébloui*," said one of the speakers, "was the only term which could adequately define the mixed state of surprise, delight, and general acute excitement in which the fiery essay had left him. Within the compass of a brief discourse the accomplished lecturer had handled nearly the whole scope of human philosophy, as well as of the art which it was their privilege to practise, tracing, as far as practicable, the infinite ramifications which he supposed to connect the material elements of the successful practice

¹ Part ix. ch. iv. § 4 (Vol. VII. p. 302).

INTRODUCTION

of architecture with our moral natures.”¹ The speaker rightly characterised the paper in noting its fiery energy and width of range; it was characteristic also in its confession of the speaker’s divided counsels—continuing his pursuit of the beautiful, and yet half “seceding from the study of all art.” In this respect the paper is typical, as we have already seen and shall again see presently, of Ruskin’s temper at the time. The incidental references in the paper to the characteristics of Greek art, and notices of Greek coins, connect it also with other pages in the present volume.

III. *The Cestus of Aglaia*, being nine papers on the Laws of Art, with especial reference to engraving, which originally appeared in the *Art Journal* during 1865 and 1866.—Passages from these papers were afterwards incorporated by Ruskin in other books, and such passages were omitted from *The Cestus of Aglaia* when the papers were reprinted in *On the Old Road* (1885). In this edition of his writings, which is complete and chronological, it has seemed better to reprint the papers in their entirety, referring back to them in the later books. *The Cestus of Aglaia* is thus for the first time here printed in a complete and collected form; and it is accordingly furnished with a title-page and list of contents (pp. 43, 47). The papers are very characteristic, as the author himself said,² of one of his manners of writing; and some further remarks upon them are given lower down in this Introduction (p. lxiv.).

IV. *The Relation of National Ethics to National Arts*, a lecture delivered on Sir Robert Rede’s foundation to the University of Cambridge on May 24, 1867.—This lecture, here printed from the author’s MS., has not hitherto been published. The significance of it in subject is touched upon lower down (p. xxiii.); in style, it shows the note of academical state, of courtly elaboration, which was often heard in the Professor’s lectures at Oxford.

V. *On the Present State of Modern Art, with Reference to the Ad-
visable Arrangement of the National Gallery*, a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution on June 7, 1867.—This lecture also, here printed from the author’s MS., has not hitherto been published, though Ruskin (as we know from a passage in *Time and Tide*³) had intended to include it in his Works. The practical suggestions with which it concludes were directed to purposes which he had closely at heart,

¹ The speaker was Mr. Digby Wyatt: see *Sessional Papers of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, 1864–1865, p. 152.

² *Queen of the Air*, § 134 (below, p. 408).

³ See Vol. XVII. p. 469.

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and which foreshadowed in a remarkable way some things afterwards accomplished. In reading his suggestions for People's Palaces (§§ 25, 26), we may remember that Sir Walter Besant's *All Sorts and Conditions of Men*—the story from which the People's Palace in the Mile End Road was to spring—did not appear till fifteen years later (1882). Ruskin's suggestions of a Standard Series of art specimens (§ 29) and of a Standard Library (§ 28) were in some measure carried out by himself in his Art Collection at Oxford and in his *Bibliotheca Pastorum*. His plea for Municipal Art Galleries (§ 29) was delivered at a time when few such institutions as yet existed. Whether Ruskin would altogether have approved of the Tate Gallery may be doubted, but it is worth noting that he advocated the building of a new National Gallery on the Millbank site (§ 37). Ruskin's views on the proper co-ordination of museums and galleries—his distinction between popular and educational collections and treasure-houses of what is rich and rare—are well worth attention to-day. He returned to the subject thirteen years later in a series of letters in the *Art Journal* on "A Museum or Picture Gallery: its Functions and its Formation," and in the St. George's Museum at Sheffield he was able, on a small scale, to give an object-lesson in what he meant.

VI. *Fairy Stories*, an Introduction (written in 1868) to a re-issue of the English translation of the *Märchen* of the Brothers Grimm with Cruikshank's illustrations.—A letter written in 1883 after one of his illnesses, in which Ruskin fears that he "can never more write things rich in thought like the preface to *Grimm*,"² indicates the importance which he attached to this piece. Its relation to Cruikshank, and its remarks on the historical significance of mythology, connect it with other pages in the present volume.

VII. *The Flamboyant Architecture of the Valley of the Somme*, a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution on January 29, 1869.—This is a third lecture which has not hitherto been published. It is here printed from the author's MS.³ The lecture is one of the most charming, as also perhaps one of the least discursive and most closely knit, of Ruskin's occasional discourses. Had he been able to complete his scheme for *Our Fathers have Told Us*, it is probable that he would

¹ These are reprinted in a later volume.

² See the letter to F. S. Ellis of June 11, 1883; at p. 66 of the privately issued *Stray Letters from Professor Ruskin to a London Bibliopole* (1892), reprinted in a later volume of this edition.

³ It appears that Ruskin had some idea of publishing it at the time, for the readers of the *Art Journal*, 1869, p. 95, were told of "an expectation that the lecture may appear entire in our pages."

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have used the lecture in the eighth part of that work, which was to be given to “the Cathedral of Rouen and the schools of architecture which it represents;¹ for Abbeville,” he says elsewhere,² “is the preface and interpretation of Rouen.” Abbeville was one of the towns to which Ruskin was most attached, and it was after a long sojourn there in 1868 that the lecture was written. He took immense pains with it, and put together an Exhibition of Fifty Paintings and Sketches to illustrate it. The Catalogue of this Exhibition is here reprinted as an appendix to the lecture (pp. 269–277); and several of Ruskin’s drawings, as well as some other illustrations, are included among the plates (see below, pp. lxxv., lxxvi.).

VIII. *The Queen of the Air* (1869).—This well-known book is discussed below (pp. lxxv.–lxxi.).

IX. *Verona and its Rivers*, a lecture delivered at the Royal Institution on February 5, 1870.—This lecture, written similarly after a long sojourn at Verona in 1869, is here reprinted from the volume entitled *Verona and Other Lectures*, issued in 1895. For it, as for the Abbeville lecture, Ruskin prepared an Exhibition of Fifty Drawings and Photographs; and here, again, the Catalogue is reprinted as an appendix to the lecture (pp. 449–458), and several of the illustrations are given (see pp. lxxviii., lxxix.).

Finally, in an appendix to the volume, reports are given of some minor lectures on artistic subjects (1861, 1865, 1868).

1867–1869

The writings and discourses, thus included in the present volume, comprise, as we have seen in the introduction to the preceding volume, only one side of Ruskin’s work during the years in question. A passage in a letter to his mother, written from Winnington on May 25, 1868, well describes his divided allegiance:—

“My writing is so entirely at present the picture of my mind that it seems to me as if the one must be as inscrutable as the other. For indeed I am quite unable from any present crises to judge of what is best for me to do. There is so much misery and error in the world which I see I could have immense power to set various human influences against, by giving up my science and art, and

¹ See the “General Plan of *Our Fathers have Told Us*” given in the volume containing *The Bible of Amiens*.

² *Præterita*, i. § 180.

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wholly trying to teach peace and justice; and yet my own gifts seem so specially directed towards quiet investigation of beautiful things that I cannot make up my mind, and my writing is as vacillating as my temper."

The working compromise at which Ruskin arrived has already been indicated (Vol. XVIII., p. xx.). More and more he connected his art-teaching with moral, and even political, injunctions; in this respect the Rede Lecture is especially characteristic.

Having in the preceding Introduction traced his movements during the years 1864–1866, we now proceed to follow the outer tenor of his life and the developments of his temper during 1867, 1868, and 1869.

Ruskin's principal work in the early part of 1867 was the letters to Thomas Dixon, published later in the year as *Time and Tide* (Vol. XVII.). They were, as he says, desultory, and were written without any extreme care, for he was in a state of health which admitted of no intense concentration. His diary indicates various morbid conditions; he records many weird dreams, and notes that he sees "floating sparks in his eyes"; but it was in the life of the affections that he was most suffering.¹ Alternations of disappointment and hope, chagrin, anxiety, and the weariness of waiting—these were the causes of the despondency, sleeplessness, and nervous prostration from which he often suffered, and which caused him to write to a young artist friend, to whom at this time he opened his heart, that he was "dying slowly." Ruskin, more even than most men of wayward genius, coloured his writings with his moods, and readers of the letters to Dixon in a previous volume will already have noted in them many a sign of irritability and gloom. He found relief in drawing, and several of the studies of birds and shells which now form part of the Ruskin Art Collection at Oxford were done in the early part of 1867. Some extracts from his diary record the progress of his studies in this sort, and show how much pains he took with them:—

"1867. Jan. 17.—Painting pheasant—large: a singularly good and bright day.

"Jan. 18.—Finished pheasant satisfactorily, though day foggy.

"Jan. 20.—Got on with partridge.

"Jan. 21.—Finished partridge; three birds in a week. I began smallest pheasant on Tuesday last; on Wednesday finished it and began the large one. Thursday and Friday, worked hard at large

¹ References to this thread in Ruskin's life occur on pp. xxxviii., lix.; the story is already partly familiar to readers of *Præterita* (iii. ch. iii.).

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one. Saturday, finished it (all but done on Friday), and began partridge; yesterday worked hard and to-day harder and finished it: the best of the three.

“Jan. 22.—Hard to work again on my partridge’s bill to-day, but got it right.

“Jan. 23.—Got a bit of snipe nicely done.

“Jan. 24.—Finished snipe all but wing.

“Jan. 25.—Bettered my snipe’s wing.

“Jan. 26.—Angry in morning and unhappy all day, but painted teal’s head wonderfully.

“Jan. 28.—Worked hard at teal in morning.

“Jan. 29.—Finished teal, successfully.”

A study of a wild duck, probably the finest of Ruskin’s drawings of birds, is now included in the collections of the British Museum.¹ Reproductions of it and of some similar studies will be found in later volumes.

He was busy too, at this time, with schemes of practical benevolence. “Plan cottage life,” he notes in his diary (March 14), “and help to poor, if spared; Joanna very happy about it.” Other entries record visits from Miss Octavia Hill, doubtless on the business of his housing schemes, to which reference has already been made.² These schemes which Miss Hill originated with Ruskin’s help have borne fruit in the reclamation of some of the worst areas in London.

“They aroused public opinion,” writes a friend of their author,³ “stimulated legislation, and turned the attention of philanthropists and capitalists in the direction of providing civilised dwellings for the poor. Miss Hill’s recommendations and methods have spread to most of the cities and crowded towns of Great Britain, and have been adopted in America and in many European countries. . . . The ‘grain of mustard seed,’ from which the sturdy plant of housing reform sprang, was first planted in Ruskin’s house at Denmark Hill. One day he and Miss Octavia Hill were having a friendly chat, and he lamented the dreariness of life without an object other than the usual daily round. ‘I paint, take my mother for a drive, dine with friends or answer these correspondents,’ said Mr. Ruskin, drawing a heap of letters from his pocket with a rueful face, ‘but one longs to do something more satisfying.’ ‘Most of us feel like that at times,’ said his visitor. ‘Well, what would you like to be doing?’ asked Ruskin.

¹ It was “B. 295” in *Guide to an Exhibition of Drawings and Sketches by Old Masters and Deceased Masters of the English School*, 1901.

² See *Time and Tide*, § 148 (Vol. XVII. p. 437).

³ Sarah A. Tooley in the *Daily Chronicle*, July 24, 1905.

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‘Something to provide better homes for the poor,’ was Miss Octavia Hill’s quick reply. The idea seemed to strike Ruskin, and, turning sharp round in his seat, he asked: ‘How could it be done? Have you a business plan?’

“Miss Hill was only a girl at the time, but was impressed by Mr. Ruskin’s desire that the scheme should pay. He said if she could make it do so the work would spread. After further consideration, Mr. Ruskin provided the working capital, and Miss Hill became the happy landlady of three dirty and neglected houses, in the neighbourhood of her own home, in the Marylebone Road. . . . Personal management was the keynote then as it is now of Miss Hill’s work, and from the first she collected the rents herself and made friends with her tenants. I have heard Miss Hill describe how, in those early days, she climbed dark stairways covered with every kind of dirt and abomination, and grasped her rent-bag tightly when in the darkness some evil-looking face suddenly appeared. But never once was she robbed or insulted. The people trusted her from the first, and when they learned that almsgiving was not a part of her scheme, and that no arrears of rent were allowed, began to take a pride in cultivating self-respect and independence. Money was spent to make the houses decently habitable, overcrowding was discouraged by letting two-roomed tenements for little more than had been charged for one room, but the net profits on the property were not reduced because no arrears were allowed. The financial result was that at the end of a year and a half the scheme had paid five per cent. revenue, and had repaid £48 of the capital. Miss Hill’s labour was gratuitous, but she put aside the percentage which a collector would have charged and devoted it to beneficent purposes. Mr. Ruskin’s faith in her was amply justified, and under his advice and encouragement Miss Hill took an increasing number of courts under her management, and so her work grew.”

Ruskin referred to Miss Hill’s labours in one of his public lectures of this year (see p. 213, below).

He saw much, during these months, of Carlyle, Froude, and Helps; the gentle wisdom of the author of *Friends in Council* was perhaps more helpful to his mood than the stimulus, through thunder and lightning, of Carlyle. How strongly Helps sympathised with Ruskin’s social aims, how greatly he admired the devotion which inspired them, is shown in the dedication of *Conversations on War and Culture*.¹ A letter of a somewhat later date in this same year (1867) shows the germ in Ruskin’s mind of those practical efforts towards social regeneration which were presently to take shape in *Fors Clavigera* and “St. George’s

¹ Now given in a note to *The Eagle’s Nest*, § 208 (Vol. XXI.).

Guild." It was written to a Yorkshire correspondent and friend, who desires to remain anonymous:—

“DENMARK HILL, S., 15th May, '67.

“It was very nice of you to wait till I had done with those letters, though I can't even yet write for a little while, for I have two most troublesome lectures to write, one for Cambridge and one for London;¹ but I shall be nearly free by the 7th of next month, I hope. . . .

“I am very glad of your letter, in all ways. Do you know, I think the end of it will be that any of us who have yet hearts sound enough must verily and in deed draw together and initiate a true and wholesome way of life, in defiance of the world,² and with laws which we will vow to obey, and endeavour to make others, by our example, accept. I think it must come to this, but accidents of my own life have prevented me until lately from being able to give to such a plan any practical hope; but now I might, with some help, be led on to its organization. Would you join it, and vow to keep justice and judgment and the peace of God on this earth?

“Ever affectionately yours,

“J. RUSKIN.”

For inner consolation, meanwhile, in hours of suffering and anxiety Ruskin turned, as his diary shows, to the Bible. He tried, daily for some months, to cast his horoscope, and to be guided and strengthened, by *Sortes Biblicæ*. Thus on May 15 we read, “Open at ‘Behold, we have left all and followed thee’”; on May 19, “Open in evening at ‘Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life’”; and on August 14, “‘Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, wherefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness’”; and again, on the same day, “Opened at Isaiah xxxiii. 17: ‘Thine eyes shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.’ My old Bible often *does* open there, but it was a happy first reading.” Other entries here follow (as in some other similar pages of the diary), which seem to show that he enumerated methodically such good things as befell him, in accord with his Bible readings:—

“By Grasmere and St. John's Vale to Keswick. (a) Met poor woman at Wythburn and helped her. (b) Crossed my forehead three times with the waters of the spring at St. John's Chapel.

¹ The lectures here printed, pp. 163-229.

² In a later letter to the same correspondent (May 21) Ruskin qualifies these words thus: “I do not in the least propose any onslaught on public opinion or custom in any violent way; but only, the observance of certain laws which may be seen to be exemplary in their working.”

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(c) Conquered petty anxiety; forded brook, and found good of it.
 (d) Drank healths after dinner—seven. (e) Out on lake in evening.
 Fell asleep in boat near St. Herbert's. Glorious sky of *broken* white
 silvery jagged-edged clouds."

This last entry has taken us forward to Ruskin's summer holiday. In May he had given the Rede Lecture at Cambridge (pp. 163–194), and received there an honorary degree. He writes a pleasant account of the ceremony to his mother (May 23), knowing how much it would please her, and signs it "Ever, my dearest mother, your most affectionate son, J. Ruskin, LL.D." He notes the Public Orator's "Latin laudatory speech (recommending you for the honour of degree), some ten or fifteen minutes long; in my case, there being nothing particular to rehearse, except that I had written books 'exquisite in language and faultlessly pure in contention with evil principles.'" The orator, he adds, "dwelt more on *The Crown of Wild Olive* than on any other of my books, which pleased me, as it was the last." Then, a fortnight later, he had a lecture to deliver at the Royal Institution (pp. 197–229). Both lectures were successful, but such exercises were hardly to be commended as tonics for overwrought nerves; so he determined, after a visit to Osborne Gordon at Easthampstead Rectory, in Berkshire, to seek rest and refreshment, if such might be, in the English lakeland which had given him so many happy days in his boyhood, and which was to be the home of his later years.¹ At first the contrast between old times and new—between the recollections of the unclouded home of childhood and the burden and the mystery of later knowledge and suffering, and the sight, moreover, of new hotels and fouled streams—saddened him, as letters to his mother show:—

"LOWWOOD, WINDERMERE, *Sunday morning, June 30.*—It is all very painful and saddening to me. But I am absolutely in want of fresh air and idleness, and *must* take them as a nasty medicine, though I would incomparably rather be working amongst the camphor and ambergris of insects and mummies in the British Museum, and deciphering wing-scales and hieroglyphics, if I could, or working all day long in my own mineral room. But I cannot, and must walk and strive to banish sad thoughts as best I can. I feel a *little* bettering in strength, already."

"I have the secret," he writes to his mother later (July 16), "of extracting sadness from all things, instead of joy, which is no enviable

¹ His itinerary was as follows: Greta Bridge (June 28), Lowwood (June 30), Bowness (July 1), Huntley Burn (July 2), Keswick (July 4), Carlisle (July 10), Wigton (July 11), Keswick (July 16), Waterhead, on Windermere (August 7), Keswick (August 15), Matlock (August 23), Denmark Hill (August 24).

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talisman. Forgive me if I ever write in a way that may pain you. It is best that you should know, when I write cheerfully, it is no pretended cheerfulness; so when I am sad, I think it right to confess it."¹

"CROWN HOTEL, BOWNESS,
"Monday morning, 1st July, '67.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,—Lowwood was too noisy and fashionable (Manchester fashion) for me, so I drove over here yesterday, and got a lovely little corner-parlour in, I believe, your old Inn, though I am confused about it, the view seeming to me so much more beautiful than it did then. But the change in myself, and in all things connected with me, is so great and so sorrowful to me that I can hardly bear the places. It is very different—having you laid up at home, and my father dead, and myself old and ill—from running about the hills, with both of you expecting me home to tea, and I myself as lithe as a stag. I would give anything to be back at home at work on my minerals. But I have no doubt the fresh air and exercise are not only good for me, but vitally necessary just now, so I must endure my rest and liberty with patience. I had a pleasant row across the lake last night, and it is all very lovely. I went up and examined Mr. Richmond's estate before dinner, the father and son (of the farm) showing me everything with great courtesy and niceness. It is very beautiful, but the railroad station, not a mile distant, is a fatal eyesore. If Mr. Richmond builds the house at all for me, my principal study room must be at the back, looking *up* to the rocks and the wild roses (very lovely, both, just now), and only the company room looking to the great view—a very noble one, *but* for the railroad, and having the advantage of endless study of magnificent sunset. I am much struck by the fiery purity and power of the *northern* sky. Last night it was more like an Aurora Borealis than mere sunset; the fire seemed *in* the clouds, and there is hardly any night. It is twilight till eleven, and clear dawn at two (as I know—to my discomfort when sleepless). I hope to reach Huntley Burn about 5 o'clock to-day. I leave this note behind me here, to be sure of post.

"Ever, my dearest mother,

"Your most affectionate Son,

"J. RUSKIN.

"I will send you an envelope from Huntley Burn. I can't to-day, because I don't know if I shall choose to stay longer than a day there (supposing they ask me), it depends so much on their ways."

¹ This extract is reprinted from W. G. Collingwood's *Life of Ruskin*, p. 242 (1900 ed.), where it is incorporated in a letter of July 19.

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It will be noticed in this letter that Ruskin already had some vague idea of settling in the Lake Country. After a few days on Windermere, Ruskin went to pay his visit to Lady Henry Kerr at Huntley Burn, on the Scottish Border, close to Abbotsford. He enjoyed the company of his hosts, and recollections of it came back to him in after years. "Will you forgive my connecting the personal memory," he said in one of his last Oxford lectures, "of having once had a wild rose gathered for me, in the glen of Thomas the Rhymer, by the daughter of one of the few remaining Catholic houses of Scotland, with the pleasure I have in reading to you this following true account of the origin of the name of St. Cuthbert's birthplace;—the rather because I owe it to friendship of the same date, with Mr. Cockburn Muir, of Melrose?"¹ But Ruskin found the routine of a visit tiresome, and soon returned to solitude. The hills and moors brought him increase of strength:—

"KESWICK, 2nd July, 1867.

"MY DEAREST MOTHER,—I have your nice line of yesterday. . . . The letter from Mr. Brown of Venice² contained nothing particular, but he is quite well.

"I had a really fine walk yesterday, discovering two pieces of mountain scenery hitherto unknown to me, and very truly noble—buttress of rock on the flanks of Grasmere, between this lake and Crummock water, which may compare not disadvantageously with many pieces of Swiss scenery. I was delighted to find them, as it is always good to have a motive for one's walks, and I shall want to see these on all sides. The weather was delightful—though sudden and mysterious blasts of wind came up through the gorges, the *tops* of the hills were all in perfect repose. I had rather a severe walk of five hours, without stopping more than twenty minutes in all (I never drew bridle once, from here to Grasmere top—five miles, and 2800 feet up), and came in very fresh and frightfully hungry, so I must certainly be gaining strength.

"Your letter to-day is very prettily written, so you are certainly not *losing* it.

"Ever, my dearest mother,

"Your most affectionate Son,

"J. RUSKIN.

"I take some pains with my writing, but am always shocked to look at it afterwards. I had a botanist breakfasting with me to-day who wrote a most beautiful hand, but he was one lump of pleasant active egotism—utterly *insensitive*, and I fancy my broken hand comes partly of sensitiveness, which I should be sorry to lose."

¹ *Pleasures of England*, § 66.

² Rawdon Brown: see below, p. liv.