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The Works of John Ruskin

VOLUME 31: BIBLIOTHECA PASTORUM

JOHN RUSKIN
EDITED BY EDWARD TYAS COOK
AND ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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THE COMPLETE
WORKS OF
JOHN RUSKIN

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JOHN RUSKIN

EDITED BY

E. T. COOK

AND

ALEXANDER WEDDERBURN



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GEORGE ALLEN, 156, CHARING CROSS ROAD

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VOLUME XXXI

BIBLIOTHECA PASTORUM:

THE ECONOMIST OF XENOPHON

ROCK HONEYCOMB

THE ELEMENTS OF PROSODY

AND

A KNIGHT'S FAITH

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INTRODUCTION TO VOL. XXXI

THIS volume collects various books, edited or written by Ruskin, which he published under the general title *Bibliotheca Pastorum*. It thus comprises: (I.) The *Economist* of Xenophon, translated by two of Ruskin's pupils, and prefaced by himself (1876); (II.) Selections from Sir Philip Sidney's *Psalter*, arranged and annotated, with introductory essays, by Ruskin, under the title *Rock Honeycomb* (1877); (III.) an essay by Ruskin on the *Elements of English Prosody* (1880), explanatory of terms issued in the foregoing book; and (IV.) *A Knight's Faith* (1885), under which title Ruskin rearranged, with much matter of his own, the journals of Sir Herbert Edwardes describing *A Year on the Punjab Frontier, 1848-1849*.

It should be explained that No. III. in the foregoing list was not numbered by Ruskin as a volume in *Bibliotheca Pastorum*; it was too short for such. Vol. III. in the series was to have been a further selection from Sidney's *Psalter*. This, however, Ruskin did not publish. He had, however, prepared a portion of it for the press, and this additional matter, now for the first time printed, is here included in *Rock Honeycomb*. Finally, in an Appendix, given in this volume for a reason presently explained (pp. xxxiv., xxxv.), is some matter which will throw a new light for most people on Ruskin's many-sided interests—namely, examples of his setting of songs to music.

The volume belongs, in virtue of its origin and purpose, to the same group of Ruskin's undertakings which includes *Fors Clavigera* (Vols. XXVII.–XXIX.) and the *St. George's Guild* (Vol. XXX.). "A republication of classical authors in standard forms" had "long been a main object" with Ruskin. In his lecture "Of Kings' Treasuries" (1864), he had spoken of "a royal series of chosen books" as a dream of the future.¹ Ten years later, in Letter 37 of *Fors*, he described how, in his community of St. George, "every household would have its library," which was partly to be the same in each home, consisting

¹ *Sesame and Lilies*, § 49 (Vol. XVIII. p. 104).

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of a selection of classical authors.¹ The occasion of his setting himself to provide such a library may be traced to the country-walk at Brantwood, mentioned in *Fors*, during which he chanced to enter a shepherd-farmer's cottage and to examine the books provided for "little Agnes." He found them to be pitiful stuff, and determined, "as a duty which it behoved St. George's Company to do, to see that all the 'bibles' which she has, whether for delight or instruction, shall indeed be holy bibles."² This purpose was again described, a few months later, as the provision for every village library of "a chosen series of classical books, perfectly printed and perfectly bound."³ In January 1876 he was able to announce that a beginning was then in hand;⁴ and the present volume contains the contributions actually made by Ruskin towards the completion of his purpose. In what sense he used the word "classical" of books to be included in his *Bibliotheca*, and in what sense it was to be a *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, Ruskin himself fully explains (below, pp. 5, 7).

Ruskin's scheme, as was ever the case with him, was larger than the fulfilment; though, as we shall see, he issued other books, intended to the same end, than those formally included in the series entitled *Bibliotheca Pastorum*. Its scope, as defined in *Fors* and again here in the Preface to Xenophon's *Economist* (p. 20 *n.*), was to include illustrations "piece by piece" of Athenian, Roman, Florentine, Venetian, and English life and history. In Letter 61 of *Fors*, he gives the following list of books which, among others, he hoped to prepare, or to persuade friends to prepare, for inclusion in the Standard Library:—

Xenophon's *Economist*.

Gotthelf's *Ulric the Farm Servant*.

History of England after the Conquest.

Life of Moses.

Life and Writings of David.

Hesiod.

Virgil, *Georgics* i. and ii. and *Æneid* vi. } in one volume.

Livy, books i. and ii.

Dante.

Chaucer.

St. John the Divine.

¹ Vol. XXVIII. p. 20.

² Letter 51 (March 1875), Vol. XXVIII. p. 276.

³ Letter 58 (Vol. XXVIII. p. 434).

⁴ Letter 61 (Vol. XXVIII. p. 499). Compare Letter 67 (*ibid.*, p. 648).

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The Xenophon was duly published as volume i. in *Bibliotheca Pastorum*. Ruskin did not include Plato in the list, but at various times he made considerable progress with a translation of the *Laws*, and in connexion with it he wrote various notes on Athenian history. Of Books i. and ii. he completed a translation, adding a good many notes; this translation was made day by day in his diary between February 1879 and March 1880, and afterwards copied out by his secretary for revision. Ruskin had some intention of publishing it. A translation of *Ulric*, edited by Ruskin, was published, though not included in that series; with other studies of peasant-life, which he issued, it is now printed in Volume XXXII. The History of England, which was to have been written by one of Ruskin's Oxford friends,¹ did not see the light. "Some of the lines of thought," which he had hoped to see followed, may be gathered (as he says) from the few lectures on *The Pleasures of England*.² The story of other cities was to have been told in the intended series of studies in national history and character, illustrated by artistic monuments, which he entitled *Our Fathers Have Told Us*; but this scheme was carried no further than *The Bible of Amiens*.³ The Writings of David were in some sort covered by *Rock Honeycomb*. The other projected volumes of *Bibliotheca Pastorum* were never realised. It may be noted further in this connexion that Ruskin's republication of *Dame Wiggins of Lee*⁴ was intended to provide little Agnes of the shepherd's cottage with a nursery rhyme more rhythmical, and therefore, as he characteristically adds, more moral,⁵ than those of current "popular literature." His books on Birds, Flowers, and Rocks were also intended, as has been said already in an earlier volume,⁶ as "school grammars."

I. XENOPHON'S "ECONOMIST"

The *Economist* of Xenophon, with which Ruskin started his *Bibliotheca Pastorum*, had long been a favourite book with him. It was, indeed, the foundation on which he built all his studies in Political Economy.⁷ This was the reason of its selection for the first volume

¹ See Vol. XXIII. p. 57 and Vol. XXVIII. p. 499.

² See § 6 of that work (Vol. XXXIII.).

³ Except for two chapters on the history of monasticism, now appended to the *Bible of Amiens* (Vol. XXXIII.).

⁴ See Vol. II. pp. 519 *seq.*

⁵ See *Fors*, Letter 50 (Vol. XXVIII. pp. 260-261).

⁶ See Vol. XXVII. pp. lxxvii.-lxxviii.

⁷ See the letter to his father of November 5, 1861, and the Preface to *Unto this Last*, Vol. XVII. pp. xlix., 18.

in his library of classical authors. The first law of creation, he says (p. 10), is "that by the sweat of the brow we shall eat bread." Therefore, "the economy of the field is the first science," and this is stated by Xenophon "in terms that cannot be mended." Where in any ancient classic is to be found a model of the country gentleman so admirable and so imitable as Xenophon's portrait of Ischomachus? He apportions his day between exercises for health and strength, and the diligent furthering of his fortunes (xi. 19). He takes an active part in the farming of his land—"always looking at the way the labourers are doing it, and making any improvements he can upon what is being done" (xi. 16). He sifts charges of injustice, and adjusts quarrels and differences (xi. 23). He seems to have practised some form of co-operation, allowing his dependants to share in any abundant good which Heaven might bestow (xii. 6); just, as in the house, his wife made the housekeeper "rejoice with us when we rejoiced" (ix. 12). How well, too, as Mr. James Davies has remarked,¹ does Xenophon put into the mouth of Ischomachus "the cardinal points of husbandry—the criteria of the nature of the soil; the seasons and manner of sowing; the operations of reaping, threshing, winnowing; the directions for planting trees and the precautions to be observed. We may claim every farmer's assent to Xenophon's axiom as to a soil showing its nature even in neglect: 'even when lying waste it shows its nature all the same; for, cultivate the soil which brings forth wild things in beauty, and you will find it yield in their beauty things no longer wild' (xvi. 5). How often is this saying re-affirmed *à propos* of thistles! Again, weak soils must be sown lightly; for a weak soil can as ill ripen much corn as a worn-out sow mature a large litter (xvii. 10). The details of the latter chapters surprise us by their applicability to modern rules of farming and timber-planting, being replete with maxims as to which the pupil will hardly credit his ears when told that they are ancient. Of one thing he may be sure, that Xenophon's teaching herein is for all time, as, indeed, it is in his kindred treatises. True, it was no fashion of his day to cultivate huge farms with a minimum of man and an abundance of machinery, but he makes farming pay so well that Ischomachus used to buy a farm that had been neglected, to get it into cultivation, and sell it at a profit" (xx. 22). *Hanc olim veteres vitam coluere*: Ruskin quotes the familiar lines from the *Georgics* in an early letter of *Fors*,² and he issued this translation of Xenophon's book in *Bibliotheca*

¹ In the *Academy*, June 30, 1877.

² See Vol. XXVII. p. 144.

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Pastorum for a picture of “the actual life of all glorious human states.”

It was not only, however, as a treatise on rural economy that Xenophon’s book appealed to Ruskin. It contains also, he says, “a faultless definition of wealth” (p. 25); “the most perfect ideal of kingly character and kingly government”; and “the ideal of domestic life” (p. 26). The definition of wealth and the picture of Cyrus as the ideal king have been touched upon in earlier volumes.¹ The pictures of domestic life are among the most charming passages in Greek literature, and equally charming is Ruskin’s characterisation of Xenophon’s ideal of the relations between man and wife, and of the sphere of good women (p. 26). Here, again, the book entirely accords with Ruskin’s own views, as set forth in *Sesame and Lilies* and on many a page of *Fors Clavigera*. He remarks of Xenophon’s pictures that they “cannot be changed or amended but in addition of more variously applicable detail”; and as in the agricultural, so in the moral and domestic, part of Xenophon’s *Economist*, every reader must be struck by the modernity of the ancient writer. In what age would the curtain-lecture of Ischomachus (ch. x.) be out of date? And how interesting a commentary it is upon the secrets of Greek toilette, as vases and bronzes and the dainty ladies of the Tanagra figurines reveal them to us! How timely, again, is Xenophon’s argument (ch. v. § 5) for the Yeomanry! The reflections by the way, in which Xenophon’s book is rich, continually arrest the reader as ancient instances of modern saws. “One hears the maxim ‘a place for everything and everything in its place’ with an impression,” says Mr. Davies, “that it is a sparkle of modern wisdom.” But Ischomachus propounds and illustrates it (viii. 16). “If you want a thing well done, do it yourself” was a lesson taught by Cyrus in his park at Sardis (iv. 22). “The master’s eye,” says a German proverb, “does more than both his hands”; but the German wisdom is adopted from the Greek, as related in a story of a Persian and his king (xii. 20).

In such ways, then, is the *Economist* of Xenophon a “classic,” in the sense, understood by Ruskin, of a book which states “unchanging truth expressed as clearly as possible” (p. 5). He commended it also as a model of style; a model, just because it presents “no model of grace, or force in rhetoric. It is simply the language of an educated gentleman,” and “for the greater number of us this is the most exemplary manner of writing” (p. 27). Ruskin’s characterisation of the style of

¹ See, for Xenophon’s definition of wealth, Vol. XVII. p. 288; and, for Cyrus, Vol. XXIII. p. 358, Vol. XXVIII. p. 738, and Vol. XXIX. p. 111.

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Xenophon was anticipated, in some measure, by Cicero, who found, indeed, “the Muses speaking by the mouth of Xenophon,” but noted its “remoteness from all forensic clatter.”¹ Simplicity and absence of affectation were the points which Ruskin desired his pupils to keep steadily in mind in their translation.

The *Economist* of Xenophon was much admired by the ancients, and also in the days of the Renaissance. Cicero made a translation, of which fragments remain. It found great favour with the Italians of the Renaissance, so that Alberti, or some other, speaks of imitating “*quel Greco dolcissimo e soavissimo scrittore Senophonte*.”² An early English translation (1534) of the book has been mentioned in a previous volume;³ it was a book, said the translator, “whiche for the welthe of this realme I deme very profitable to be red.” A German translation followed in 1567, and another English one in 1727; but the *Economist* then fell into neglect in this country, and Professor Mahaffy, who devotes some interesting pages to the book in his *Social Life in Greece* (1874), notes that it had been “strangely ignored by our scholars.”⁴ Ruskin in 1867 had expressed the wish that “the whole book were well translated.”⁵ “It was at one of his breakfasts to his ‘diggers’ and other undergraduates in the spring of 1875,” writes Mr. Wedderburn, “that Ruskin said he wanted the translation done. Leonard Montefiore and I, both then at Balliol, volunteered, and started the work; but Montefiore, who was not a ‘classical’ scholar, decided to give it up, and proposed Collingwood, who was at University, to me as collaborateur. In the Long Vacation of 1875 I joined Collingwood at a cottage he then had on Windermere, and there we completed our first draft of the translation. We then went over to Brantwood for a few days, and stayed, I think, a few weeks. Anyhow, we there revised the translation with Ruskin, reading it out to him, and he following our translation with the Greek. This was our morning’s work, and in the afternoons we made the new harbour (Vol. XXIII. p. xxiv.) or went expeditions with Ruskin. It was the first of many long stays at Brantwood for us both.”

The book has not hitherto been reprinted; and opportunity has been taken of the present occasion to mark some few places in which the translation seemed to the present editors to require reconsideration.

¹ *Ad Marcum Brutum Orator*, xix. 62; ix. 32.

² *Opere volgari di Leon Battista Alberti*, quoted by H. G. Dakyns in *Hellenica*, p. 380. The translation of the *Economist* by Mr. Dakyns is in vol. iii. part i. (1897) of his edition of *The Works of Xenophon*.

³ Vol. XVII. p. 524 n.

⁴ Ch. viii. p. 258 (1st edition).

⁵ See Vol. XXVII. p. 524.

INTRODUCTION

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The Preface contributed by Ruskin to the book is among the most elaborate and characteristic of his shorter pieces. "I'm just doing a most careful Preface to Xenophon," he wrote to Professor Norton (Oxford, March 1, 1876)—"mapping Greek colonies and religion all over Europe, and am giddy with the lot of things that focus, now, out of past work." The rapid generalisations which he thus mapped out, if suggestive, are perhaps not always firmly grounded; he submitted them, for the most part, as suggestions only (p. 10), and suggestive they certainly are. In style, the Preface, as a reviewer wrote at the time,¹ is "faultless in eloquence, glancing from impregnable invective to enthusiasm, from biting scorn to reverential praise, with the varying brilliance of sunlight, now intensifying the edge and glitter of ice, now falling in showers of jewels on the unfrozen waters."

The *facsimile* of MS. here introduced (p. 21) shows the first draft of the beautiful passage in which national life is compared to the growth and flowering of sword-leaved lilies.

The *manuscript* and corrected proofs of Ruskin's Preface, which are in Mr. Wedderburn's possession, form an unusually complete series. (1) First there is the original MS. Preface. To this, passages were added afterwards by Ruskin; and, on the other hand, some passages were omitted: examples of these latter are now printed as footnotes (see, *e.g.*, pp. 16, 23). (2) Next there is a fair copy by Ruskin of the first part of the Preface. Then follow (3) the First, and (4) the Second Proofs, corrected by Ruskin. These proofs, however, do not contain the last half of § 13 down to the end of the first sentence of § 21—a passage added by Ruskin to the Preface after he had got it into page-revise. A revise with this additional matter in print and some further corrections by Ruskin (written in by Mr. Wedderburn) is in the Coniston Museum (see below, p. 4). Even this, however, did not conclude Ruskin's revision; since (5) the Preface as published again differs somewhat from the last-mentioned revise.

A comparison of the Preface in these several stages shows the great care and constant revision which the author bestowed upon this piece of writing. One or two passages may be given. The first sentence of section 11, for instance, passed through the following stages:²—

(1) The third, or Arcadian Doric race gave example of such as was best for uncultivated and simple persons, rendering rude life delightful and untaught life noble, by the virtues of endurance and silence.

¹ In the *Examiner*, September 30, 1876.

² The numbers—(1), etc.,—refer to the stages enumerated above.

(3) The third, or Arcadian Doric race gave example of such a life as was best for uncultivated and simple persons, rendering such untaught life noble, by the virtues of endurance and silence.

(4) The third race, of the Isle of Shade, gave example of such, etc.

Again, at the end of section 2, there is a passage which underwent five revisions, thus:—

(1) . . . a new name written. And this he can do not by knowing all that has been done before, but by seeing some new truth, for revelation of which the time has come, being the part and contribution of such time to the world's treasure of heavenly things. Only this is never possible, except to modest persons, submissive to the scheme of the eternal Wisdom; nor possible in any high degree to persons who have not been in some large measure initiated in the knowledge of the past.

(2) . . . a new name written. Which is done, by those appointed for it, not after knowing all that has been known before, but in seeing some truth which could not have been known till now, the time for its revelation having come. But this is never possible except to modest persons, submissive to the scheme of the eternal Wisdom; nor has it yet proved possible in any great degree except to persons trained reverently in some portion of the wisdom of the past.

(3) . . . a new name written. Which is done, by those appointed for it, not after they have learned all that has been known before, but in seeing some truth which could not have been known till then, the time for its revelation have come. But this . . . wisdom of the past.

(4) . . . a new name written. Which is done, by those ordered to such masonry, not after . . . wisdom of the past.

On the final proofs (not preserved) Ruskin revised yet once again the sentences which had cost him so much trouble, for as printed they run:—

(5) . . . a new name written. Which is indeed done, by those ordered to such masonry, without vainly attempting the review of all that has been known before; but never without modest submission to the scheme of the eternal wisdom; nor ever in any great degree, except by persons trained reverently in some large portion of the wisdom of the past.

Such instances might be multiplied from almost every page of the Preface. As it was ultimately printed, it is one of the smoothest and most felicitously worded of Ruskin's shorter pieces; but, as may be traced in the passage just given, he revised his sentences constantly

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in order to put the greatest amount of ideas into the fewest and clearest words, and his verbal felicities did not always occur to him upon first thoughts.

II. "ROCK HONEYCOMB"

(For the title, see the 16th verse in the 81st Psalm: "With honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee." "To those who have really known either David's joy, distress, or desires," Sidney's Version of the Psalter will, Ruskin says (p. 136), "be enlightenment of heart and eyes, as the tasted honey on the stretched-out spear of David's friend.")

The second volume in *Bibliotheca Pastorum* was a selection from the metrical paraphrases of the Psalter by Sir Philip Sidney and his sister, Mary, Countess of Pembroke,—the lady celebrated in the famous epitaph commonly ascribed to Ben Jonson:—

"Underneath this sable hearse
 Lies the subject of all verse,
 Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
 Death! ere thou hast slain another,
 Learn'd and fair and good as she,
 Time shall throw a dart at thee."

It is not known when the paraphrases were made. In 1580 Sidney, having fallen into disfavour at Court, stayed for several months at Wilton with his sister, when they pursued their literary studies together and the *Arcadia* was begun. Perhaps it was at the same time that they planned the version of the Psalms, which the Countess is supposed to have finished after her brother's death.

The history of this work, at once celebrated and little known, is one of the curiosities of literature; but indeed Sidney's literary productions generally have been, except among the inner circle of his day, more talked about than read—an unconscious illustration, perhaps, of an underlying conviction that the man was greater than his work. His work as a poet has, indeed, high value and importance; but his contemporaries seem to have felt that his life was his greatest poem. None of his books was published while he lived, though they circulated freely in manuscript, according to the fashion of the day, among his friends and the learned world; and the *Arcadia*, published after his death, passed through seventeen editions before 1674; but not until

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1873 were his poems fully collected and properly edited. The metrical version of the Psalter, by Sidney and his sister, had to wait more than two and a half centuries before being printed at all. The version was well known, by manuscript copies, at the time of its composition. It is mentioned by Fulke Greville (see below, p. xxv.); and Ben Jonson told Drummond that “Sir P. Sidney had translated some of the Psalmes which went abroad under the name of the Countesse of Pembrock.”¹ Praises of the Psalter appear among the multitudinous tributes, to the number of some two hundred, it is said, which were penned to Sidney’s memory. The poet Donne wrote a piece, full of curious conceits, “Upon the translation of the Psalmes by Sir Philip Sydney and the Countess of Pembroke, his sister”; and Daniel, in a dedication of his *Tragedy of Cleopatra* to the Countess, declared that

“Those Hymns, which thou dost consecrate to Heav’n,
Which Israel’s singer to his God did frame,
Unto thy voice eternity hath given,
And makes thee dear to him from whence they came.”

But time was tardy in embodying the verdict of eternity. The Psalms of Sidney and his sister were occasionally mentioned, and a few excerpts were sometimes given—as by Steele in the eighteenth number of the *Guardian* (April 1, 1713), who, as the versions “have never been printed,” presented his readers with a transcript, from a MS. in the possession of a friend, of the paraphrase of Psalm cxxxvii. Steele, referring to “our gallant countryman, Sir Philip Sidney,” as “a noble example of courage and devotion,” was “particularly pleased to find that he hath translated the whole book of Psalms into English verse.” But the version as a whole still remained unprinted; its authors had long passed away, and it remains somewhat uncertain what share each of them had in the work.

For two hundred and fifty years the Sidney Psalter thus slept in unmerited obscurity. The credit of calling it to the life of print belongs to James Boswell, the younger, who, however, died before writing the Introduction which he had planned to the work.² Ultimately the Psalter was printed in 1823 in a series of “Select Early English Poets” issued “from the Chiswick Press by C. Whittingham for Robert

¹ See p. 15 of *Notes of Ben Jonson’s Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, January 1619. Printed for the Shakespeare Society, 1842.

² The editor of the reprints of Early English Prints issued by the Chiswick Press, in which series the Psalter (as projected by Boswell) formed part, was Samuel Weller Singer.

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Triphook, Old Bond Street.” As the little volume is scarce (the edition being limited to 250 copies), I transcribe its title-page:—

“The Psalmes of David Translated into Divers and Sundry Kindes of Verse, more Rare and Excellent for the Method and Varietie than ever yet hath been done in English. Begun by the noble and learned Gent. Sir Philip Sidney, Knt., and finished by the Right Honourable The Countess of Pembroke, his sister. Now first printed from a Copy of the Original Manuscript, transcribed by John Davies, of Hereford, in the reign of James the First.”

The “Sidney Psalter” is still little known, and it is curious that J. A. Symonds in his account of Sidney in the “English Men of Letters” dismisses it in a few lines.

The manuscript from which the Chiswick Press edition was printed was copied by John Davies of Hereford,¹ himself a poet and a contemporary of Sidney. It passed from the Bright sale to Peshurst (for the small sum of £4, 16s.), and is remarkable for its fine penmanship. It is referred to in this volume as “the Davies MS.”

The editor of the Chiswick Press edition refers in his Introduction to other MSS., but it does not appear that he had collated them. Ruskin expresses the hope that “a critical edition will in good time be undertaken by some accomplished English scholar, and a chastised text given us, collected from whatever fragments exist of authoritative MS.” (p. 113). This work had, however, already been accomplished for a portion of the “Sidney Psalter,” as for Sidney’s poetical works generally, by the late Dr. A. B. Grosart in 1873. The Psalter was given in the second volume of a work with the following title-page:—

“The Fuller Worthies’ Library. The Complete Poems of Sir Philip Sidney. For the first time collected and collated with the original and early editions and MSS. Edited . . . by the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart. 2 vols. Printed for Private Circulation, 1873. 100 copies only.”²

The manuscript which Dr. Grosart adopted as most authoritative is in the Bodleian Library (Rawlinson, Poet. 25). It is written by Dr. Samuel Woodford, divine and poet (1636–1700), himself the author of a paraphrase of the Psalms. Woodford’s copy is neatly

¹ 1565?–1618. He was writing-master to Henry, Prince of Wales, the eldest son of James I. of England, who died in 1612 at the age of eighteen.

² A new edition in 3 vols. was published by Chatto & Windus in 1877.

written; he signed it at the end with the date 1694–1695, recording that “for Sir Philip Sidney’s sake and to preserve such remains of him,” he had undertaken “this tiresome task of transcribing.” The special importance of Woodford’s transcript lies in the probability that it was taken from the MS. of the scribe who copied under Sidney’s own superintendence. In the margin of Psalm xlix. Woodford makes the following note: “The very manner of this Psalm being cross’d and altered almost in every line, and in many words thrice, makes me believe this was an original book—that is, the book before me was so—for none but an author could or would so amend any copy.” These corrections are all recorded by Woodford, and one series of them is of special interest. In the case of Psalms xvi., xxii., xxvi., xxix., and xxxi. Sidney¹ had followed a practice common in Elizabethan poetry, and ended the poem with a stanza containing supernumerary lines to the extent of half a stanza. In the MS. which Dr. Woodford copied, Sidney struck out these final stanzas, writing in the margins, “Leave a space here”—that is, for a revised stanza without the supernumerary lines—the revisions being afterwards inserted. One of the original final stanzas appears in the Davies MS. (see p. 221 *n.*)² The Woodford MS., however, is neither complete nor final. It lacks the conclusion of Psalm lxxxvii. (after the fourth stanza), and omits all thenceforward up to the twenty-third line of Psalm cii., Woodford noting that “all the leaves are torn off.” He leaves blank pages in his MS. book, hoping, as he further notes, to complete his transcript from a MS. at Trinity College, Cambridge. The Woodford MS., in the case of the later Psalms, is moreover not final. Many of the paraphrases are crossed through, and are entirely different from the versions as given in later MSS. To this matter I shall have to return presently.

The MS. at Cambridge to which Woodford refers was much used by Dr. Grosart in editing his text, and it is clearly later than the Oxford MS. There are also two MSS. of the Psalter in the British Museum (12,047 and 12,048), which substantially agree with the Cambridge MS. The former (12,047) contains only a portion of the Psalter. These British Museum MSS. were formerly in possession of Dr. Samuel Butler, headmaster of Shrewsbury and Bishop of Lichfield. From No. 12,047 Dr. Butler printed a few of the Psalms in a volume of

¹ And Sidney or his sister in the case of several of the later Psalms.

² The supernumerary lines in last stanzas are, then, (1) sometimes curtailed; as in Psalms xvi., xxii., xxix., xlix.; (2) sometimes curtailed in the Davies MS., but expanded in others (*e.g.* Psalm xxvi., expanded into two full stanzas); and (3) sometimes retained in the Davies MS., but curtailed in others (*e.g.* Psalm xxxi., curtailed in the Oxford MS.).

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Sidneiana issued in 1837.¹ The other MS. in the British Museum contains the whole Psalter.

Only Psalms i.–xliii. are given in Dr. Grosart's book, because only those Psalms can certainly be ascribed to Sidney. The Davies MS. (followed in the Chiswick Press edition) gives, it should be explained, no indication of what portions of the Psalter were the work, respectively, of Sidney and of his sister. Ruskin, who had only the Chiswick Press edition before him, attempted no conjectures on the subject (pp. 113, 304); and he speaks of the versions for the most part in general terms as "Sidney's," though sometimes he qualifies the ascription and speaks of "Sidney or whoever the writer was" (*e.g.*, p. 245). In *Fors*, however, he speaks of the relations between Sidney and his sister "terminating in the completion of the brother's Psalter by the sister's indistinguishably perfect song."² Other MSS. of the Psalter contain a statement which has been taken as settling the question of the divided authorship. The Bodleian MS. has at the end of Psalm xliii., "Thus far Sir Philip Sidney," and the MS. 12,048 in the British Museum has at the same place, "Hactenus Sir P. S." These statements agree with a letter by Sidney's friend Fulke Greville, describing the writings left by Sidney, in which he speaks of "40 of the psalms, translated into metre."³ It has been assumed, therefore, that only the first forty-three Psalms can be attributed to Sidney, and that the rest are the work of the Countess of Pembroke.

This is perhaps the more probable assumption; but some doubt is thrown upon it by a feature in the Woodford MS. which I have noted above, but to which Dr. Grosart does not refer. That MS. transcribes frequent revisions later than Psalm xliii. (for instance, in Psalms xlv. and xlix.), and gives versions of other paraphrases (for instance, l., liii., lviii., lxii., lxix., lxxi., lxxv., lxxx.) which in the Oxford MS. are often queried or crossed, as if for subsequent revision; and which were afterwards entirely re-written, sometimes in different metres, and always (as it seems to me) with great advantage in compression and directness. The question is, who made the revisions, and who re-wrote these other versions? Woodford says nothing to suggest

¹ *Sidneiana: being a Collection of Fragments relative to Sir Philip Sidney, Kt.* Edited by Samuel Butler for the Roxburghe Club. The Psalms printed are lxviii., lxxv., lxxxix., civ., and cxii.

² Vol. XXVIII. p. 373. In a letter to Miss Susan Beever, on the other hand, he says, "His sister finished it, but very meanly in comparison; you can tell the two hands on the harp a mile off" (*Hortus Inclusus*, ed. 3, p. 73). The letter is undated, so that it cannot be known whether it gives Ruskin's earlier or later opinion; but in all probability it was a first impression, afterwards revised.

³ Quoted by Grosart, vol. i. p. xix.

that Sidney's corrections stopped with Psalm xliii.; he gives no intimation of any change (in the MS. from which he was transcribing) in the handwriting of the marginal corrector after that point. On the contrary, he continues occasionally to note the corrections which he transcribes as being "by the author under his own hand" (Psalm lxxvi.). It would, therefore, seem that Sidney's revision went further than Psalm xliii.;¹ and it is possible that the final versions of the other Psalms, noted above, were his work, and not his sister's. That Sidney first wrote the versions of Psalms i.-xliii., and his sister those of the others, certainly seems probable; but to what extent brother and sister collaborated, especially in the case of the later Psalms, must, I think, remain an open question.

Dr. Grosart, claiming for Lady Pembroke the undivided authorship of the versions after Psalm xliii., says that "there can be no doubt that the Countess's portion is infinitely in advance of her brother's in thought, epithet, and melody."² Readers of the present volume will, I think, agree with this preference for the later versions. Ruskin, it will be noted, though he does not discuss the question of authorship, remarks that "the translations attributed by tradition to Sidney include many of the feeblest in the volume" (p. 113); and it is of the later Psalms that he speaks with the highest admiration. Thus, Psalm lv. shows "the best art of verse, and is one of the notablest pieces of rhythmic English in existence." In Psalm lxv. "the melody and beat are very beautiful." Psalm lxxi.³ (quoted also in *Fors*) is "very sweet and passionate"; while Psalm lxxii. is "throughout magnificent and beyond praise." All these Psalms must perhaps be attributed to Lady Pembroke. Her work has been subjected to a double slight. Some said that it was not hers, while others have denied its merit. The former statement evoked a spirited reply in the eighteenth century from the author of a vindication of women's rights in literature:—

"She translated many of the Psalms into English verse; which are bound in velvet and, as I am told, still preserved in the library at Wilton. But then we are informed by Sir John Harington, and afterwards by Mr.

¹ But though it went further, it was not completed upon the MS. from which Woodford transcribed. The theory cannot wholly be dismissed that "thus far Sir Philip Sidney" meant not "here ends Sir Philip Sidney's authorship," but "to this point Sir Philip Sidney finally revised." When we pass to Psalm xliv. in the Oxford MS., we find the version queried but not finally corrected.

² J. A. Symonds (p. 76) is of the same opinion: "her part in the work exhibits the greater measure of felicity."

³ Ruskin refers to the final and re-written version, not to the earlier one in the Oxford MS.

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Wood, and from him by the late learned Dr. Thomas, that she was assisted by Dr. Babington, then chaplain to the family, and afterwards Bishop of Worcester; for, say they, 'twas more than a woman's skill to express the sense of the Hebrew so right, as she hath done in her verse; and more than the English or Latin translation could give her.' But why this should be thought a cogent argument to prove it, I am very much at a loss to know."¹

A modern critic, while not disputing the ascription of the greater part of the "Sidney Psalter" to Lady Pembroke, commits himself to the general statement that her verse "has few poetic qualities."² This is a matter on which readers of the present volume may be left to form their own opinion.

It was the little Chiswick Press edition of 1823 which chanced to fall into Ruskin's hands, and caused him to include a selection from the Sidney Psalter in his *Bibliotheca Pastorum*. With Ruskin study of the Psalms had begun in his early childhood, and he pursued it throughout his life—not, indeed, critically or historically, but for edification. "The Psalter alone," he says, "which practically was the service book of the Church for many ages, contains merely in the first half of it the sum of personal and social wisdom."³ The Sidney Psalter appealed to him further for the author's sake. His interest in Sidney—which appears in several of the early letters of *Fors Clavigera*—had perhaps been quickened at Brantwood by local tradition. Looking from his study-window across the lake, he saw the old Hall where Sidney is supposed at one time to have stayed (p. 105).⁴ On reading Sidney's paraphrases, Ruskin found in them an "almost fiercely fixed purpose at getting into the heart and truth" of the matter (p. 116). They contained "many illustrative or explanatory passages, making the sense of the original more clear" (p. 131). They "continually interpret or illustrate what is latent or ambiguous in the original" (p. 118).⁵ The very familiarity of the Bible and Prayer-book versions deadens the reader's perception. The

¹ See *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain, who have been celebrated for their Writings or Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts, and Sciences*, by George Ballard: Oxford, 1752. The statement that Lady Pembroke was assisted by Gervase Babington was made by Sir John Harington, not of knowledge, but as a conjecture ("I suppose" are his words) on the ground quoted by Ballard: see Sir John Harington's "Briefe View of the State of the Church of England" in H. Harington's *Nugæ Antiquæ* (1779), vol. i. p. 149.

² "S. L. L." in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

³ *Bible of Amiens*, ch. iii. § 50 (Vol. XXXIII.). For Ruskin's very numerous references to, or quotations from, the Psalter, see the General Index to this edition.

⁴ See *The Book of Coniston*, by W. G. Collingwood (1900), p. 74.

⁵ See, for instance, Ruskin's notes on pp. 187, 207, 257, 291.